

# ODISHA REVIEW

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JULY - 2013

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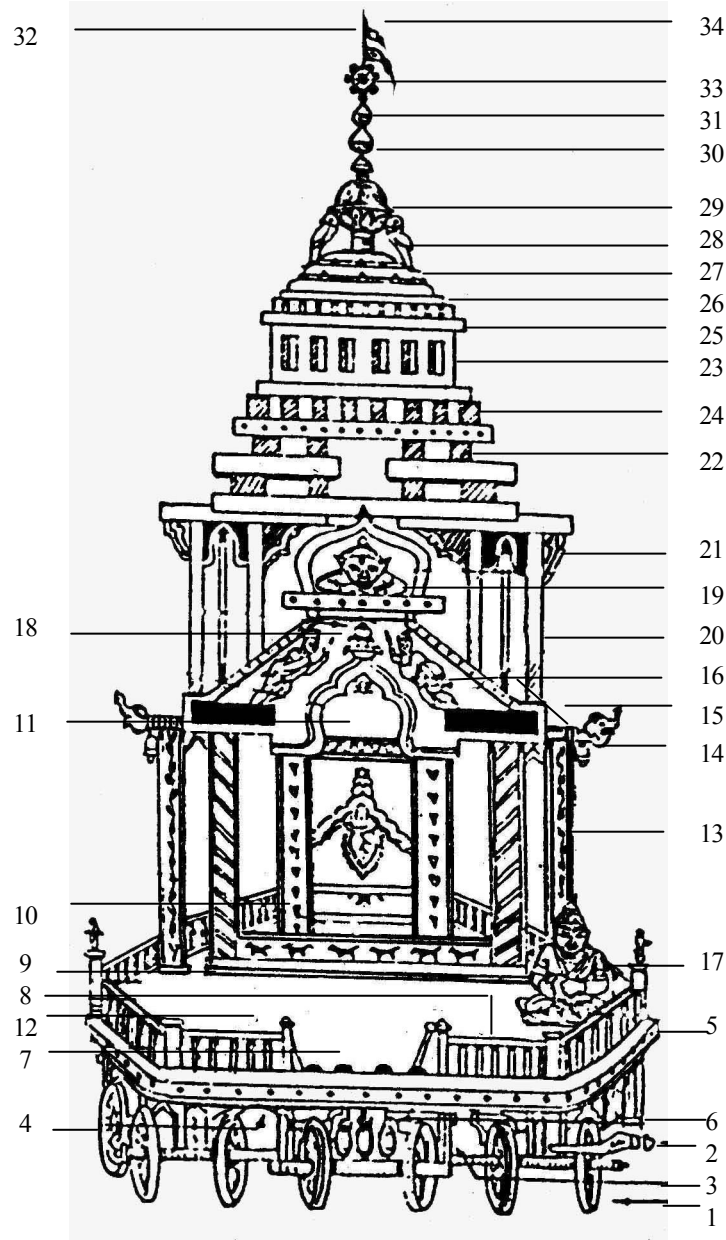
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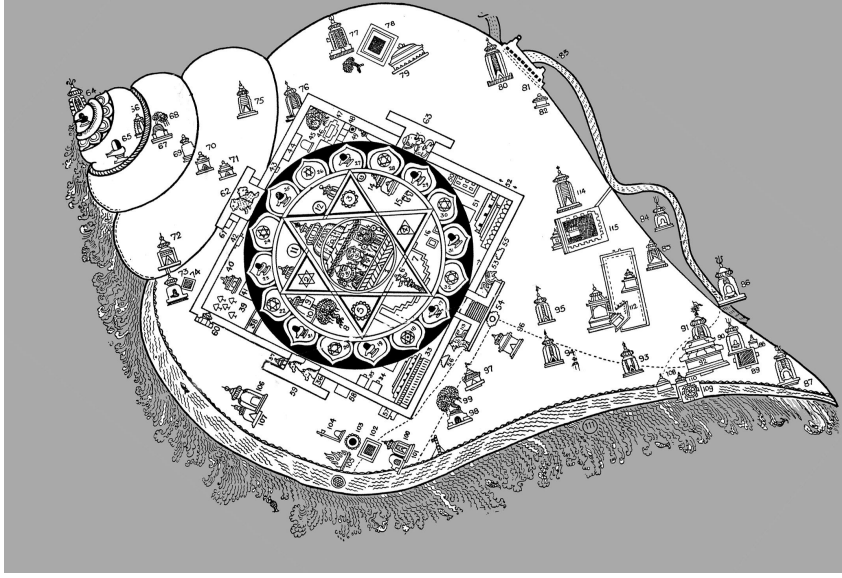
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## THE PARTS OF A CHARIOT



- (1) Chaka or the wheels (2) Dandia (3) Ara (4) Banki (5) Hansa Pata (6) Kani (7) Sankha-dwara (8) Jali (9) Gaipata (10) Singhasana (11) Kanak Mundai (12) Bhumi (13) Sola Nahaka (14) Makara Danda (15) Basanta (16) Duar Ghoda (17) Sarathi Pida (18) Kumbha Pati (19) Rahu Pati (20) Athanahaka (21) Banki (22) Pida (23) Rusi Pata (24) Danda (25) Para Bhadi (26) Khapuri (27) Pada (28) Olata Sua (29) Dadhi Nauti (30) Kalasa (31) Kasthi (32) Danda (33) Chakra (34) Copi Ketana or the flag.

# SANKHA KSHETRA



- |                                                |                          |                           |                         |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Balabhadra, Jagannatha, Subhadra & Sudarsan | 29. Vaikuntheswara       | 58. Prahari Hanuman       | 87. Vilweswara          |
| 2. Khetreswari Vimala                          | 30. Yagnyaswari          | 59. Dakshinadwar (S.gate) | 88. Siddha Hanuman      |
| 3. Mahalaxmi                                   | 31. Isaneswar            | 60. Durgamadhava          | 89. Indradyumna Teertha |
| 4. Uttar Durga                                 | 32. Sitaia Devi          | 61. Mangaleswari          | 90. Nilakantheswara     |
| 5. Bata Mangala                                | 33. Pakasala             | 62. Paschimadwar (W.gate) | 91. Adinrusingha        |
| 6. Garuda Stamva                               | 34. Dakhineswara         | 63. Uttardwar (N.gate)    | 92. Gundicha Mandapa    |
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| 18. Indranidevi                                | 46. Sialilata            | 75. Ghatamangala          | 104. Adisankara Pitha   |
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| 20. Swana Vairabi                              | 48. Tapaswi Hanuman      | 77. Markandeswara         | 106. Varahi Devi        |
| 21. Mukteswari                                 | 49. Survarnakupa         | 78. Markandeya Teertha    | 107. Shyama Kali        |
| 22. Chstrakali                                 | 50. Ananda Bazar         | 79. Saptamatruka          | 108. Bedi Hanuman       |
| 23. Batamarkandeya                             | 51. Devasnana Mandapa    | 80. Alamba Devi           | 109. Chakra Teertha     |
| 24. Katyayani                                  | 52. Meghanada Prachira   | 81. Atharnala             | 110. Chakra Narayan     |
| 25. Gopeewara                                  | 53. Singhadwara (E.gate) | 82. Makardhwaj Hanuman    | 111. Mahodadhi Tirtha   |
| 26. Beda Kali                                  | 54. Aruna Sthamva        | 83. Vargavi River         | 112. Jagannatha Ballava |
| 27. Pataleswara                                | 55. Badachhata Math      | 84. Mukteswara            | 113. Kashi Biswanatha   |
| 28. Bhubaneswari                               | 56. Chhauni Math         | 85. Bata Mangala          | 114. Visweswari         |
|                                                | 57. Pejanala             | 86. Kapoteswara           | 115. Narendra Sarovar   |



रथारुढो गच्छ न पथि मिलितभूदेवपटलैः  
स्तुतिप्रीदुर्भावं प्रतिपदमुपाकर्ण्य सदयः  
दयासिन्धुर्वन्धुः सकलजगतां सिन्धुसुतया  
जगन्नाथः स्वामी नयनपथगामी भवतु मे ।

(from Shri Jagannathastakam)



यो दवेधा प्रकृतिः पुमानिति मतः स्त्रीपुंसदेहाश्रितः  
यस्त्रेधा विधिविण्णुशंकरवपुधारी दरीदृश्यते  
श्रीमन्नीलगिरौ च दारुतनुधृग् योऽसौ चतुर्धास्थितो  
राधाकृष्णतनूधरो विजयते वृन्दावने स प्रभुः ।

(from Mukundavilasa)

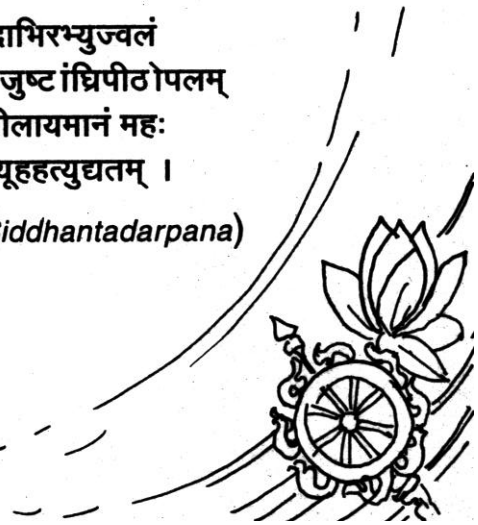
अस्ति प्रशस्तललितो लवणाब्धितीरे  
नीलाचलाञ्जलतटी मुकुटायमानः  
एकस्त्रीमूर्तिकुहकाकृत चित्रमूर्ति -  
लक्ष्मीपतिः सकलदैवत वन्दनीयः ।

(from Bhakti Bhagavat)



श्रीभूमाधवचक्रचक्रवनीभूद्भद्राभिरभ्युज्ज्वलं  
श्रीकण्ठप्रमुखाखिलामरशिखा जुष्टाङ्घ्रिपीठोपलम्  
श्रीनीलाचलमौलिमण्डन महानीलायमानं महः  
श्रीभूमाधरितस्मरं भवतु नः प्रत्यूहहत्युद्यतम् ।

(from Siddhantadarpana)



## *Editor's Note*



Centuries of myths, legends and history have all blended into a great composite culture centered around Jagannath-the Lord of the Universe. The earlier references to Lord Jagannath are found in Puranas and ancient literature. Legendary sources suggest that Jagannath was originally worshipped by the tribals, the Savaras. In course of time the cult of Jagannath took an Aryanised form and various major faiths like Saivism, Shaktism and Buddhism were assimilated into the concept of Lord Jagannath as an all-pervasive philosophy symbolizing unity in diversity. The philosophy of Lord Jagannath thus defies all definitions and is yet comprehensive enough to perceive unity among beliefs of all sects and castes. The Rath Yatra is grand culmination of a series of celebrations spread over summer and monsoon months. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the bright fortnight of the month of Ashadha, the three deities come out of the temple in a spectacular procession called Pahandi. The deities adorned with *tahias* are pulled in rhythmic movement to the beat of cymbals, drums and chanting of Their names in chorus by devotees in frenzied ecstasy. After the deities are seated in the respective chariots, starts the Chherapanhara by Gajapati Maharaja. The most exciting part is the pulling of the chariots by thousands of people along Bada Danda, the Grand Road. The chariots move slowly until They reach the Gundicha Temple where the three deities rest for a night adorned with Dasavatar costumes. They enter the Gundicha Temple on the next day morning in the usual Pahandi style and stay there for 7 days. On the 10<sup>th</sup> day of bright fortnight of Ashadha the return of chariots or Bahuda Yatra takes place. The three chariots pulled by thousands of devotees reach the Singhadwar. On the next day the deities are attired in the costumes of glittering gold which is known as Suna Besha. On the *dwadashi* day, the three deities go back to Ratna Simhasana. Their arrival to the sanctum sanctorum marks the end of Rath Yatra, the grand festival of chariots.

Like devotees thronging to pull the chariots every year, thousands of people throng the four Hindu spiritual pilgrimage shrines- Kedarnath, Badrinath, Gangotri and Yamunotri to offer prayers and receive blessings from holy Ganges. But this year the holy water turned violent and claimed many lives. The disaster dubbed as "Himalayan Tsunami" unleashed torrents of water in hilly regions, sending boulders and mud sludge crashing down and burying homes and buildings. It has killed thousands and displaced tens of thousands with death toll expected to rise sharply. Nature has once again proved that tampering with it could result in devastation. The people of Odisha express their heart-felt condolence to the victims of this unprecedented disaster. We are extremely grateful to the Chief Minister of Odisha for having taken timely action to save the

survivors of this Himalayan Tsunami as well as contributing Rs. 5 crore for relief and restoration measures to be undertaken by the Uttarakhand Government.

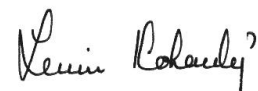
The sustained efforts mounted by our State have resulted in higher inclusive economic growth during the recent years. All socio-economic development indicators of the State have recorded impressive improvement during the last 13 years. In 2012-13, the State has achieved a growth rate of 9.14 per cent. That apart the State has to grapple with the problem of Left Wing extremism. Therefore, there is a need for accelerated efforts and special support from Govt. of India to sustain the momentum. Our Chief Minister rightly observed that uncertainty in the release of Central share under the Central Govt. sponsored schemes like AIBP, NRHM and BRGF adversely affected their implementation. The Chief Minister has also impressed upon the Planning Commission to redefine the criteria for according Special Category Status to Odisha. He has also demanded that the Special Plan for KBK be extended by 10 years with enhanced funding to bring the regions at par with the other regions of the State.

Keeping in view the Navakalebar ceremony of the Holy Trinity at Puri, scheduled in the year 2015 after a period of 19 years. A large number of projects have already been undertaken for infrastructure strengthening and development. Hon'ble Chief Minister of our State has also submitted proposals seeking a Special Central Assistance of Rs.1397 crore to the Planning Commission for this important religious and cultural event of eastern India.

Last but not the least, we all have to learn lessons from the unprecedented destructions caused by the "Himalayan Tsunami" in Uttarakhand. We cut trees indiscriminately but forget to plant one. Ecological sensitive areas are exploited for commercial gains not caring for long-term implications. As Odisha is amidst the nature, for a bright future and to maintain its sanctity, it depends on all of us as to how we maintain the ecological balance and keep the earth safe for generations to come.

For this wonderful Special Issue on Rath Yatra, I express my heartfelt thanks to our Hon'ble Minister, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Director and the entire team of Information & Public Relations Department. My special thanks to all the esteemed writers of this issue including the Director, Odisha Government Press and his team for their efforts in bringing out this priceless publication.

**Jay Jagannath.**



Editor, Odisha Review



# GOOD GOVERNANCE





## MID-DAY MEAL (MDM) PROGRAMME IN ODISHA

Education is one of the key parameters of a nation's development. It is said that a country is more civilized if its people are more educated. But where hunger is a barrier for education, food is to be guaranteed. It is MDM which is a food insurance scheme against classroom hunger.

Sarba Siksha Abhiyan met many needs of the schools like School Buildings, Boundary Wall, Tube well, Toilet, Textbooks, Uniforms, Remedial Learning, Child Friendly Equipments, Adequate number of teachers and so many other things. Still then 20% children remained out of school. And those children who came to school, many out of them came with empty stomach who could not concentrate on study and did not like to remain inside the classroom. It is MDM which addressed the issues. MDM attracts the out-of-school children, retains the in-school children and drives out class-room hunger.

MDM is another popular flagship scheme of Government of India which the State Govt. runs on 75:25 funding basis.

It is the largest school feeding programme of the world. In India on every school working day 11 Crore students take hot cooked MDM in 12 Lakh schools.

In Odisha everyday 63,531 schools serve MDM to 54,21,728 students.

Let us have statistics of Odisha per day. On an average

**Per day –** 633.26 : MTs Rice, 48.01 : Mts Dal, 316.63 : KL edible Oil

**Per week –** 29.45 : MTs Soyabadi, 193.07 : MTs Vegetable, 1,08,43,452 : Eggs

are consumed. To run this huge scheme 1,33,202 Cook-cum-Helpers, 34,441 WSHGs and 3 NGOs namely Akshaya Patra Foundation, Nandi Foundation and Damodar Jew Sevayatan, 63,118 SMC are involved who are the cooking agents and managers of this scheme.

When a householder arranges one feast for the villagers or for his kith and kin on the occasion of his son/daughter's marriage or some other social functions he knows how difficult it is to feed the invitees peacefully without any threat to discipline, quality of food, cleanliness, hygiene, community feeling etc.

But, see, it is a daily affair in the school. So some hiccups here or there, some aberrations here or there should not question the utility and credibility of the scheme.

While weighing the pros and cons of the scheme let us first discuss what the people have to say who are against this scheme. They opine that MDM has its adverse effect on schooling or study.



Teachers are in short supply and when engaged in MDM they neglect teaching. So the primary objective is affected. Others are of the opinion that kitchen inside the school creates a lot of disturbance and distracts the students from study. Others oppose MDM on the ground that its quality is very poor and children fall ill taking MDM.

True, whatever they allege cannot be brushed aside. But is it enough to do away with the scheme ?

Should we throw the baby with the bathwater because the bathwater is dirty? Should we cut our head to get rid of headache ?

MDM may not be required for the children of the affluent who constitute 5% in rural area and 25% in urban area but in Govt. Primary and Upper Primary Schools many students wait eagerly for the lunch hour break to satiate their hunger.

Many people are under the impression that children who come to school with stomach-full of Rice or Chuda or Pakhala (Soaked Rice very common for Odias) have no need of MDM. Similarly some parents feed their children Maggi, Noodles, Chowmein and believe these foods are status food of urbanites and affluent. Their children need not take MDM. This is absolutely wrong.

MDM is not meant for filling the empty stomach only. It is a supplementary nutrition which the body requires. The menu prepared by the committee consisting of Addl. Secretary, S&ME Deptt., State Nodal Officer (MDM), FA-cum-Joint Secretary, S&ME Deptt., Prof. & HoD, Food & Nutrition, College of Home Science, OUAT, BBSR, Nutrition Officer, UNICEF, Asst. Director (MI), FS & CW Deptt., MI Officer, 'FS & CW Deptt. and approved by Government of Odisha is unique in the same it guarantees presence of carbohydrate, protein, fat, vitamin, iodine, iron in the food.

## Menu Calculation Sheet

### Revised ration cost for Primary students under MDM for 2013-14

| Days           | Sl. No. | Name of the content                     | Quantity | Cost of Ration | Energy (in K. cal) | Protein (in gms) |
|----------------|---------|-----------------------------------------|----------|----------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Mon & Thu      | 1       | Rice                                    | 100 gms  | Free of cost   | 346                | 6.4              |
|                | 2       | Dal                                     | 25 gms   | 1.50           | 84                 | 5.5              |
|                | 3       | Oil                                     | 5 gms    | 0.35           | 45                 | -                |
|                | 4       | Vegetables.                             | 50 gms   | 0.80           | 20                 | 0.8              |
|                |         | Condiment & Salt (Iodised) as required. |          |                |                    |                  |
|                | 5       | Fuel                                    | -        | 0.30           |                    |                  |
| <b>Total =</b> |         |                                         | -        | <b>2.95</b>    | <b>495</b>         | <b>12.7</b>      |

Average ration cost : Rs.2.95 x 2 days = Rs.5.90



| Days           | Sl. No. | Name of the content                      | Quantity | Cost of Ration | Energy (in K. cal) | Protein (in gms) |
|----------------|---------|------------------------------------------|----------|----------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Tue & Fri      | 1       | Rice                                     | 100 gms  | Free of cost   | 346                | 6.4              |
|                | 2       | Soya                                     | 12 gms   | 0.90           | 51                 | 6.5              |
|                | 3       | Oil                                      | 5 gms    | 0.35           | 45                 | -                |
|                | 4       | Vegetables.                              | 100 gms  | 1.34           | 40                 | 1.6              |
|                |         | Condiment & Salt (Iodised ) as required. |          |                |                    |                  |
|                | 5       | Fuel                                     | -        | 0.30           | -                  | -                |
| <b>Total =</b> |         |                                          | -        | <b>2.89</b>    | <b>482</b>         | <b>14.5</b>      |

**Average ration cost :** Rs.2.89 x 2 days = Rs.5.78

| Days           | Sl. No. | Name of the content                     | Quantity | Cost of Ration | Energy (in K. cal) | Protein (in gms) |
|----------------|---------|-----------------------------------------|----------|----------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Wed & Sat      | 1       | Rice                                    | 100 gms  | Free of cost   | 346                | 6.4              |
|                | 2       | Egg                                     | 1 no.    | 4.50           | 86.5               | 6.7              |
|                | 3       | Oil                                     | 5 gms    | 0.35           | 45                 |                  |
|                | 4       | Vegetables.                             | 20 gms   | 0.40           | 8                  | 0.3              |
|                |         | Condiment & Salt (Iodised) as required. |          |                |                    |                  |
|                | 5       | Fuel                                    | -        | 0.30           | -                  | -                |
| <b>Total =</b> |         |                                         | -        | <b>5.55</b>    | <b>485.5</b>       | <b>13.4</b>      |

**Average ration cost :** Rs.5.55 x 2 days = Rs.11.10

**Average Protein content : 13.5 gms**

**Average K. Calorie content : 487.5**

**Total Average Ration Cost of Primary Students : Rs.3.79**

### **Revised ration cost for Upper Primary students under MDM for 2013-14**

| Days           | Sl. No. | Name of the content                      | Quantity | Cost of Ration | Energy (in K. cal) | Protein (in gms) |
|----------------|---------|------------------------------------------|----------|----------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Mon & Thu      | 1       | Rice                                     | 150 gms  | Free of cost   | 519                | 9.6              |
|                | 2       | Dal                                      | 30 gms   | 1.80           | 111                | 6.6              |
|                | 3       | Oil                                      | 7.5 gms  | 0.52           | 67.5               | -                |
|                | 4       | Vegetables (Leafy)& Potato               | 100 gms  | 2.56           | 105                | 2.5              |
|                |         | Condiment & Salt (Iodised ) as required. |          |                |                    |                  |
|                | 5       | Fuel                                     | -        | 0.54           |                    |                  |
| <b>Total =</b> |         |                                          | -        | <b>5.42</b>    | <b>802.5</b>       | <b>18.7</b>      |

**Average ration cost :** Rs.5.42 x 2 days = Rs.10.84



| Days           | Sl. No. | Name of the content                      | Quantity | Cost of Ration | Energy (in K. cal) | Protein (in gms) |
|----------------|---------|------------------------------------------|----------|----------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Tue & Fri      | 1       | Rice                                     | 150 gms  | Free of cost   | 519                | 9.6              |
|                | 2       | Soya                                     | 25 gms   | 1.87           | 85                 | 13.5             |
|                | 3       | Oil                                      | 7.5 gms  | 0.52           | 67.5               | -                |
|                | 4       | Potato                                   | 100 gms  | 1.18           | 97                 | 1.6              |
|                |         | Condiment & Salt (Iodised ) as required. |          |                |                    |                  |
|                | 5       | Fuel                                     | -        | 0.54           | -                  | -                |
| <b>Total =</b> |         |                                          | -        | <b>4.11</b>    | <b>768.5</b>       | <b>24.7</b>      |

**Average ration cost : Rs.4.11 x 2 days = Rs.8.22**

| Days           | Sl. No. | Name of the content                     | Quantity | Cost of Ration | Energy (in K. cal) | Protein (in gms) |
|----------------|---------|-----------------------------------------|----------|----------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Wed & Sat      | 1       | Rice                                    | 150 gms  | Free of cost   | 519                | 9.6              |
|                | 2       | Egg                                     | 1 no.    | 4.50           | 86.5               | 6.7              |
|                | 3       | Oil                                     | 7.5 gms  | 0.52           | 67.5               | -                |
|                | 4       | Potato                                  | 100 gms  | 1.87           | 97                 | 1.6              |
|                |         | Condiment & Salt (Iodised) as required. |          |                |                    |                  |
|                | 5       | Fuel                                    | -        | 0.54           | -                  | -                |
| <b>Total =</b> |         |                                         | -        | <b>7.43</b>    | <b>770.0</b>       | <b>17.9</b>      |

**Average ration cost : Rs.7.43 x 2 days = Rs.14.86**

**Average protein content : 20.4 gms**

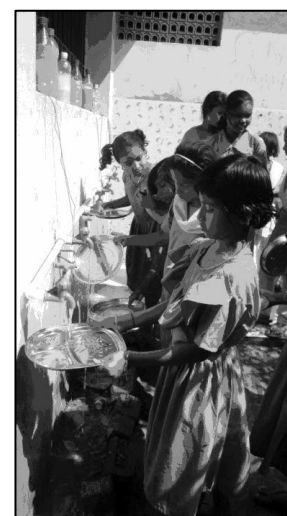
**Average K. Calorie content : 780.33**

**Total Average Ration Cost of Upper Primary Students : Rs.5.65**

Now MDM has taken steps to look after health and hygiene of the students. So Hand Wash Abhiyan and Anaemia control program has been integrated with MDM. This not only increases the hygienic attitude of the child but also takes the message beyond school boundary. Under the Hand Wash Abhiyan children are given Hand Wash liquid to wash hand before and after taking food.

Under School Health Program they take iron supplements weekly once and de-worming tablets bi-annually to fight anaemia. So MDM has asked hunger, Malnutrition and Anaemia to quit school campus.

MDM has also launched certain innovative steps like Multi Tap Water Source, Recycle the bottle for Hand Wash Abhiyan, Inclusive dining for





differently abled children, Observance of child's birthday during MDM lunch break and so on. The most important innovation in this regard is the SMC day on MDM co-operation and social audit. Every month a particular day has been announced for the SMC to sit, invite parents, PRI and NGOs to audit MDM financially and socially.

The parents and public have a right and duty to associate in MDM monitoring and management. It is with this intention some trophies are awarded to the best SMC on 15th August or 26th January. Odisha has earned a special status in MDM management in the sense that the State gives two eggs per week, the State gives 35% of matching contribution in place of 25%. The State has its MDM management absolutely decentralized upto the school management.

So as we see,

- MDM attracts out-of-school children,
- Retains in-school children
- Reduce the dropout rates
- Give supplementary nutrition
- Drives out classroom hunger
- Fights Anaemia
- Employs 34,441 SHGs, 1,33,202 Cook-cum-Helpers and 3 NGOs
- Teaches and practises social harmony and gender equity



Multi Tap Water Source

Therefore, despite whatever shortcomings there might be MDM is another important tool to guarantee the right of every child to free and compulsory education as envisaged in RTE Act, 2009 and Odisha RTE Rules, 2010.

Mid-Day Meal  
"Nutrition for Education"



## Turn Your Eyes Towards Jagannath, the Lord of the Universe

*Padmanabha Mahapatra*

On the Ratnabedi of Sri Jagannatha Temple only four idols-Balabhadra, Shubhadra, Jagannatha and Sudarshan attract the notice of the devotees and they are known as the Chaturddha Murti in general. But actually there are seven idols on the stone platform, besides Balabhadra, Shubhadra, Jagannatha and Sudarshan, there are metallic images of Sridevi and Bhudevi, placed on the right and left side of Jagannatha respectively and one wooden replica of Jagannatha symbolizing Nilamadhab, who was previously worshipped by Sabar-raj Biswabashu. The deities of Srimandir have some special features, which deserve the attention of one and all. The four wooden images are unique in more than one respect in the whole of the Hinduistic culture. Nowhereelse the images standing on the sanctum sanctorum of any important and famous temple are made of a perishable material such as Neem wood. Nowhereelse would anybody find this peculiar combination of two brothers and one sister accompanied with a specified weapon of one of the two brothers as worshippable idols on the



sanctum. Nowhereelse in the world the images are wrapped in clothpieces starched and painted, worshipped for seven, twelve or nineteen years, then discarded, buried and replaced by fresh wooden images. Nowhereelse also Shiva (Balabhadra is worshipped as Shiva) Shakti (Subhadra is considered as Bhubaneswari) and Vishnu (Jagannath has been accepted as Vishnu) are placed on a single platform and worshipped



by three different worshippers in three different Bija – Mantras at a time.

### **Jagannath in Tantra, Yantra and Mantra —**

So also the mode of worship of Purushottam Jagannatha is unique and different from that of the other Vishnu temples, situated in North and South India. Purusottam Jagannath has been identified with the mystic Vedic Bijamantra ‘Om’. Here the system of Puja has been developed and systematized in a well designated process by co-ordinating the basics of Vedic, Tantric and Vaisnavite streams. Nigam is the pure Vedic system, Agam is the Tantric system and Lokacar is the combination of both or some other system, which is followed with reference to the prevailing conditions of the locality, time and authorities. Yantra is the body of the deity, without a Yantra Puja can not be taken up. ‘[Bina Yantrenchet Puja Devatanaprasidati, Anuktakalpe Yantramtulikhet Padmadalastakam]’ [Gautami Tantra]. Mantra is the soul of the deity on a Yantra – ‘Mantrayateguptamparibhasateiti Mantrah’ – Mantra is secrete, to be learnt from the best Guru – Mantras and Yantras (Mandals) are utilized in conjunction with each other to perform powerful combination.

The deities on the Ratna Simhasana of Srimandira have been seated on specific Yantras i.e, Sri Balabhadra on Tara Yantra, Sri Subhadra on Bhubaneswari Yantra and Sri Jagannath on Kali Yantra. The Daru Devatas (made of wood) are Tantrics, as they have been constructed on Tantric background, based on directions of Matsya Puran, Sanatkumar Samhita, Biswamitra Samhita and Hayasirsha Samhita etc, all Tantric texts. The Viman of Srimandir is the Siddha Pitha and the deities thereon are Siddha Yantras. To keep the Yantras; engines moving, a perfect Yantree or Engineer is required, he is the Pujak in the literature of Srimandir and he is charged on

Tantra. ‘Mananatt Mantrah’, Mantra is very difficult, it is only to be learnt from the best Guru and it is the only means to take up the Puja in a systematic manner. Then who are the Gurus ? They are Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswar. From the above analogy we come to the conclusion that in the Puja system followed in Srimandir, Guru is there in place of Mantra, Pujak is there in place of Tantra and the deities are there in place of Yantras.

### **The concept of Purusottam —**

The wooden images of Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannath are not decent human figures. Carving of beautiful forms of the deities based on the scriptural prescriptions with Neem wood would have been quite possible. Why it was not done as such ? Balabhadra and Jagannath have two hands each projecting forward, without ankle bends and fingers. Subhadra has no hands. None of the images have ears and portions of body below the waist. Jagannath has round shaped eyes, so He is designated as Chakadola, Chaka-akhi etc. The images are more crude when originally carved but made up to look like their present form after application of several pastes and wrapping of several layers of clothes. Their faces have been painted in the prescribed codal procedure, so that their lips, nose, eyes and forehead etc. can be discernible.

There is a complete hymn in the Rig. Veda called Purusha Sukta[x-90], in which the creation of the world from the primordial Purusha has been described. This evolution of religious thought in the Rigveda led to the conception of a creator distinct from any of the chief deities superior to all the gods. As per the Purusha Sukta, the Hymn of Man, the gods are the agents, the material out of which the world is made consists of the body of a primeval giant, Purush [Man], who being thousand- headed and thousand – footed extends



even beyond the earth, as He covers it. The fundamental idea of the world being created out of a body of a giant is very ancient, being met with in several primitive mythologies.

Towards the close of the period represented by the Vedic hymns, in course of Upanisadic stage and thereafter, the inquiring minds began to look beyond the elemental Gods of the traditional belief for some ulterior source of mundane life and existence, the conception of a supreme primordial being, who being the creator of the Universe, became the favourite topic of speculation. In course of time the creator of the Universe was considered in different names, such as—Hiranyagarva, the golden embryo, Biswakarma, the all-worker, Prajapati, the lord of the creatures etc.

The concept of Purusottam is a subsequent development in the process of evolution. The first reference of Purusottam is found in Sri Bhagvadgita, which forms a part of the great epic Mahabharat. Chapter xv of Sri Gita is entitled 'The yoga of the Supreme person'. God has addressed to Arjuna – 'The perishable and the imperishable too – these are the two kinds of Purushs in the world. Of these, the bodies of all beings are spoken of as the perishable, while the Jivatma or the embodied soul is called imperishable. The supreme person is yet other than these, who having entered all the three worlds, upholds and maintains all, and has been spoken of as the imperishable Lord and the Supreme Spirit. Since I am wholly beyond the perishable world of matter or kshetra, and am superior even to the imperishable soul, hence I am known as the Purusottam in the world as well as in the Vedas'. [chapter xv –verse 16 to 18]

In Mahabharat there is mention of a 'Vedi' within the 'Brahma-bana' near the sea in Kalinga. [Mahabharata – Banaparba-114-

16to28]. In course of Agnyata Banabasa, after crossing the river Baitarani, Yudhisthira along with his other four brothers and Panchali were intimated by the Sage Lomasha - 'This is the devine forest of Brahma, the self existent one, where magnanimous dwellers are reciting their audible prayers. Here Biswakarma performed religious rites (Yagnya), and on such occasion Brahma made a gift of the entire earth to Kashyap, his pious priest. The earth being very unhappy descended into the bottom of the nether world. Then saint Kashyap beheld the Goddess Earth, appeased Her wrath, as a result, Earth was pleased, She uprose-form within the waters and showed herself in the form of a sacred altar (vedi) by the side of the Mahodadhi. Sage Lomasha has intimated to Yudhisthira - This altar(vedi) which uprose from the Mahodadhi is the creation of Agni and Surya, the vedi is 'Sri-Nivas', the residence of the daughter of the ocean, the Bhumi is created out of fire of sacrifice (Yagnyagni) and 'Sri Vishnu' is the Yagnya Purusha. The Vedi is the place of union of 'Sri' with 'Vishnu', here 'Sri' has been recognised as the consort of 'Sri Vishnu'. "Keeping this truth in mind, do necessary Japa and Tapa and take bath in Mahodadhi. [Bana Parba-114- 27-28]. Researchers have identified that Vedi as the present 'Antarvedi' and 'Madhaba' as the 'Adya-Vishnu' of Brahma-ban which has been subsequently renamed as Srikshetra.

However the shrine of Madhab after the period of the Gupta reign in Kalinga, remained under the occupation of the Buddhists for a period of around 500 years, who completely changed the system of His worship, by introducing certain Buddhistic elements which were quite alien to the Aryan concept of worship.

At this juncture Acharya Sankar during 9th century arrived at Srikshetra, his mission was



to revive the Vedic and Tantric system of worship of all the Indian Gods and Goddesses and to eliminate the Buddhist influence on Hindu rituals. Acharya Sankar, the founder of Purusottam Tatwa during 9th century, in his Gita Vasya justified that the Madhab worshipped earlier in Srikshestra was Gita's Purusottam- 'Atosmi Loke Bede cha Prathitah Purusottamah'. In this process, he revived the cult of Purusottam in the holy land of Srikshestra, consequent upon construction of a new temple and consecration of blue- stone-made Purusottam therein, during the reign of Jajati Keshari. The prior existing twin image of Laxmi and Madhab with an addition of a Serpent on their forehead was designated as Purusottam and the Vedic-smarta system of worship was re-introduced with the introduction of the basic prayer-

'Nilachal Nibasaya Nityaya Paramatmane  
Balabhadra Subhadrabhyam Jagannathayate Namah.'

After a short gap of about 200 years the celebrated Vaisnava saint Ramanuja visited Srikshestra and declared Purusottam as the Supreme Being. In his 'Sri-Bhasya', a commentary on Brahma Sutras, he described Brahman as the creator, sustainer and the destroyer of the world. Ramanuja describes – 'The term Brahman signifies the supreme person Purusottam, who transcends all imperfections and abounds in infinite classes of auspicious qualities of unsurpassed excellence'. Thus he has specified Purusottam as omniscient, omnipotent and all-merciful being-Brahman. After Ramanuja many other Vaisnava saints, experts on different schools of Vedanta, such as Nimbarka, Madhavacharya, Ballahvacharya and many others came to Srikshestra and attached some secondary names to the Brahman-Purusottam such as – Narayan, Basudeva, Hari, Vishnu, Achyuta and many others.

However, during the initial part of the Ganga reign, Chodaganga Dev, the builder of the present temple in 12<sup>th</sup> century, recorded the name of Purusottam in his several inscriptions. The Dasgoba plates of Rajraja III and other copper plate grants of Anangabhima Dev III indicate the name of the God worshipped here as Purusottam. It is certain that the deity was named as Purusottam from Madhava by Sankaracharya and this name continued persistently for a very long time both in royal charters and also in the literary works and spiritual manuscripts.

### **The concept of Jagannath Trinity —**

Sri Purusottam, the presiding deity of Srimandir seems to have been recognized as Jagannath during the Ganga reign in Odisha. Srikurmam inscription of Bhanudeva II, 1310 AD and Laxmi-Nrusimha temple inscription of Simachalam, 1319 AD clearly indicate that the word Jagannath was used in proper noun, as the second name of Purusottam of Puri. During the reign of Suryavamsi kings both the names, Purusottam and Jagannath were used as per convenience and presently the word Jagannath is frequently used both in official records and in public platforms.

Eventhough the wooden images on the Ratnavedi are not decent human figures, they are considered as Govinda – Gopijanballav-Srikrishna, Mahavidya Bhubaneswari and Bhagabata Basudev respectively when their normal puja is undertaken. However, in course of time the Jagannath Trinity has been interpreted as Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswari, Jagannath as Vishnu, Subhadra as Brahma, and Balabhadra as Maheswar respectively. In Kalijuga Brahma is not to be worshipped, hence his Sakti Subhadra has replaced him. The rituals of the temple are partly Vedic, partly Tantric or an admixture of all.



The Jagannath cult, in reality, is an amalgam of different cults, and religions, even of the practices and faiths of primitive tribes. In the opinion of Dr. M. N. Das, the famous historian – If the inner spirit of all religions pointed at an universality, Odisha breathed a spirit of cosmopolitanism to represent that spirit. Here on the soil of Odisha Primitivism, Jainism, Buddhism, Brahmanism, Saivism, Saktism and Vaisnavism have merged into Jagannath cult and Odisha represent a synthesis of all those faiths. Srikshetra stands on its unique cross cultural phenomenon and the fact is unchallengeable that Lord Jagannath is the symbol of diverse concepts and ideologies in regard to God and religions.

#### **Conclusion —**

Jagannath Trinity, the Supreme God, is the embodiment of Sat (Truth), Cit (Knowledge) and Ananda (Bliss) and is the Supreme Reality. Though beyond the Gunas, He is full of Gunas. Though beyond the Universe, He permeates the Universe. He pervades all and all is pervaded by Him. The whole creation also rests on Him. The supreme Lord, who is consolidate knowledge and bliss, manifests Himself variously as Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswar. All these forms are true and eternal, though appearing as three, they are essentially one for all time and all purposes.

Dear Devotee ! Please stand behind the Garuda Stambha. Turn your eyes towards the Jagannath Trinity. Have full faith in God, fill your heart with full confidence and devotion, put forth your open mind before Him, firmly hold the belief that the propitious hand of Jagannath is constantly over your head and is shading you. Your call will never go in vain. Please have your faithful look, look and look towards the Trinity. Balabhadra and Jagannath have projected their hands forward, smiling and calling you, come very very closer and closer to Ratnasimhasan, now if you so desire, you may embrace us, otherwise We will catch hold of you. Mother Subhadra is in front of your's, call Her just like a child, fully dependent on the mother, call with full confidence, this mother of your's will take you up to Her bosom and satisfy you with the stream of nectar from Her heart. Surrender before the Trinity, it must be an unconditional total surrender, then there will be joy and joy alone in your life.

---

Padmanabha Mahapatra, Sri Mandira Purohita, Pratihari Lane, Matimandap Sahi, Puri.





## Lord Jagannath : Sovereign Master of Universe

*Parikhit Mishra*

He is the living image of love, kindness, peace, truth and magnanimity. He is also redeemer, the deliverer of mankind and punisher of evil. Just recite the holy name of Lord Jagannath, draw his image in your mind, you and for that any believer avails fountain of spiritual joy. Lord's round eyes likened to sun and moon, His colour the beautiful black, his exuberant wide red lip, the steely strong stubby hands, the unformed ears, and unfinished legs make on you special effect. How they do it ?

*Apanipada jaban grahita Pasyatachakshuh sa  
srunotyā Karnah  
Sa betti bedyam nacha tasyasti betta  
Tamahuragryam Purusam Mahantam.*

The brief meaning of the above *sloka* is one who has no hand and leg moves fastest, captures all, sees everything around, hears even the faintest sound, knows everyone, matter or being, but no one knows Him, is called great primal spirit.

The whole range of beauty emanates from belief, the belief in god generates peace and makes your life worth living while misery, anxiety, pain and disease are common with everyone. The belief engenders positive thought which develops a highly benevolent attitude. This reminds you that life is ephemeral and you're a non-entity in the Kingdom of Lord Jagannath. The Jagannath philosophy is noblest one as it embraces the principle of love for all, hatred for none.



A verse in the Kapil Samhita signifies that Bharat is the best among countries, a land called Utkal, in other words the Jagannath Desh, best loved by gods was the paradise on earth. That's why the Jagannath Desh or Purusottam Kshetra did receive spiritual recognition. On the other hand of all places Purusottam Kshetra was the best and of all gods Lord Purusottam was the greatest: King of places and king of gods.

To rein in our unbridled way of life, we've before our eyes, an odd form we reverentially call god in the sacred wood idol of Lord



Jagannath carved out of holy log or Daru (neem tree trunk), his elder brother Lord Balavadra, younger sister Subhadra and the handy weapon Chakraraj ( King of wheels) Sudarshan.

God is formless, birthless, deathless and incomprehensible even to highly cognitive man. God's *lila* or divine act has no beginning, no end. He is inscrutable everlasting, present everywhere (omnipresent), the strongest force (omnipotent) and all-knowing (omniscient). The triumvir Lord Jagannath, Lord Balavadra and Maa Subhadra - is worshipped in separate *mantras* at ambrosia offerings thus:

It's Klim Krishnaya Govindaya Gopijan Ballavaya for Shri Jagannath, Om Namoh Bhagabate Basudevaya for Lord Balavadra and Om Klim for Devi Subhadra.

The scripture elucidated that once goddess Parvati out of curiosity asked Lord Shiva why the Purusottam Kshetra was the blessed ever a place of pilgrimage? Lord Mahesh said he had no existence, he had no shape or form. From the emptiness the ethereal Brahma gained cohesive shape, and Narayan with a decent figure descended who gave birth to five-faced Brahma, and Madhav was born who was none other than the glowing Nilamadhav in Purusottam Kshetra. The transformation into Jagannath came about after the disappearance of Nilamadhav in a devastating sandstorm in Nilagiri. The motto of the divine deed aspired at eliminating suffering, and granting deliverance to the whole of mankind. That's the reason the Lord Himself metamorphosed into Darubrahma.

In ancient time Purusottam Kshetra was also known as Nilagiri (Blue Hill) where Lord Vishnu was worshipped by tribal king Viswavasu. Who was he ? Mythology said in *treta yuga* king Bali the greatest philanthropist of his time was killed by Lord Rama. Bali's son Angad was a

committed devotee of Lord Rama. The idea of taking revenge of the slaughter of his father, nonetheless, was simmering in his head. He ardently prayed for a boon. Lord Rama, who had prescience, conceded and said that in Dwapar Yuga he would incarnate as Krishna. Angad would be born as Jara Sabar who would kill Srikrishna shooting an arrow mistakenly. But in Kali Yuga he would take birth as a tribal lord named Vishwavasu and would turn out to be a great servitor of Nilamadhav.

According to the legend the Pandavas cremated the dead body of Lord Krishna but the tummy button part of the body was left unburnt. The Pandav warrior Arjun and Jara Sabar immersed it in the sea. Over the ages Jara the greatest devotee of Lord Vishnu was born as Viswavasu. The remains of Lord Krishna was transformed into a magnificent blue (gem) stone idol. Viswavasu sighted it along the sea shore. As ordained he took the sacred idol ceremonially, sanctified and installed it by the Rohini Kunda beneath the Kalpabata tree. It was the central place of Nilagiri. The idol worshipped was Christened as Nilamadhav, and the place acclaimed as Purusottam. Here gods of heaven came down daily in midnight, visited Nilamadhav, worshipped him, prostrated before him whose other name was Narayan and left before morning.

Religion and philosophy are a centripetal force, one attracting the other, not running away from each other, if the spirit of faith and devotion is untainted, chaste and undefiled. Belief generates enormous energy of devotion while you know that God is limitless, borderless and boundless, indescribable, unimaginable and mostly illusory, but the face to face *darshan* (meeting) of Lord Jagannath makes you spell-bound.

In the scriptural teachings of the sacred Srimadbhagabat Mahapuran the power of belief



and recitation of God's holy feet for emancipation from the worldly anxiety is prominently highlighted, thus:

*One who recites hymns of holy feet of Krishna  
Worries don't touch him  
Adoring Govinda's holy feet in heart,  
If moves eyes shut  
If runs without knowing the pathway  
That being does never falldown.*

It's not gainsaying that God alone is the maker, sustainer and destroyer of what we see and don't see. He is the life giver, killer and healer of the mortals. Agnostics atheists, infidels are also not immortal, but subject to the same metabolic changes, disease, decay and death. God alone is free from it. However, miracles take place at His will. It is the believer's result of years of prayer, devotion and meditation. And it's Lord Jagannath at the centre of thought and imagination. You feel you and he are one and inseparable.

The Padwal family of Vijaywada were on their train journey to Puri. They were travelling in a general bogey. The train was running at top speed. Mrs Padwal went to the toilet at about 1.30 am. On her return the Padwals came to know that their three and half years old son was missing. The Padwal couple with the help of fellow passengers put up thorough search in the compartment but the child couldnot be found out. The Padwal couple started crying, panicked. They were sure that the child was dropped in the toilet hole and was lost for ever. Time was running out, they had to act fast. The chain was pulled and the train came to screeching halt. A search party was pressed into service. They went behind the train along the railway track. Fortunately they

discovered the boy within five km from the train. The boy was standing precariously on the edge of a bridge. He survived unscathed. The union with the child was emotional. For the Padwals it was a memorable night, but they reposed their faith in Lord Jagannath.

The Jagannath philosophy is noblest one. It embraces the universally acceptable principle of love for all, hatred for none. But when provoked the Lord goes to any extreme to punish evil-doers. The warring demons meet their end in His hand. Kansa, Ravan and their fellow devils were killed in bloody war.

The Jagannath Puri has attracted saints, sages, mendicants, laymen, poets, thinkers, philosophers over the ages. They come here for peace, solace and spiritual joy for this is a place on earth to provide plenty of it apart from the beauty of golden sea beach.

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Parikhith Mishra, Rajendra Nagar, Cuttack.





# Nabakalebara

## (The Function of New-Embodiment)

*Durgamadhab Dash*

God is Nirakara. He has no form. Yet, He is omnipresent. He is all-powerful and pervades the entire universe. In this sense, He is the foremost supreme energy of the cosmic creation. But in the popular customary sense, the Lord in the Grand Temple at Puri has a divine body. He has a definite divine form. His peripheral deities have also their own individual divine forms. The Lord, peculiarly enough, is also subject to decay and dissolution. He is said to decamp from the Temple after a certain period of time. This ritual is ceremoniously observed in the Grand Temple. It is written in the “Bhagabat”, a popular Dharma Shastra of the Hindus that everybody in this universe is perishable in nature. Even the inanimate objects are subject to decay and destruction. The world, in this sense, is transient in nature. But ‘Atma’ that exists in everybody is self-existent. It has no death. It is eternal. It was there in the past. It persists in the present. It will also subsist in future. It is always permanent. Body perishes but not the soul. In the analogy of this spiritual truth, the four divine deities of the Grand Temple - Sri-Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra, Sri Jagannath and Sri Sudarsan-relinquish their old bodies. They assume new bodies. But their “Brahmapadartha” (the inner divine-substance) is not perishable. It is transferred to the new divine bodies. The order of this spiritual metamorphosis is known as ‘Nabakalebara.’



Nabakalebara is thus an important function of the Grand Temple. In the etymological sense, it is a ritual pertaining to the new embodiment of the deities. This ritual is normally celebrated in a year having “double-Ashadha” or two Ashadhas in the Hindu almanac. Generally, such occasions arise at long intervals varying from nine to nineteen years. The Nabakalebar function is necessarily unavoidable as a consequence of the fact that the images of the Jagannath Temple are made of Neem wood and such wooden statues are normally subject to decay in such a span of time. So changes of the images are felt necessary. Nabakalebar in the Grand Temple is performed accordingly in a ritualistic manner.

The function of Nabakalebara is an expansive affair. It is performed only when the



changing of the images is felt absolutely necessary. Sometimes, there is a kind of 'small Nabakalebara' function in the Grand Temple. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Nabakalebara function was celebrated in the Temple in 1912, 1931, 1950, 1969, 1977 and 1996. In the year 1893 in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the complete Nabakalebara function had not taken place in the Grand Temple. Instead, only the ritual of 'Sriangaphita' was observed in that year. Following the ritual in that way, the outer layers of the divine deities were only opened and renewed and new paints applied to them.

In the context of this analogy, we can only say that Nabakalebara is a very old ritual. We can't say the exact period since when Nabakalebara has been in operation in the Grand Temple. The scholars are of the opinion that the Lords of the Temple had never had a peaceful time in the past in regard to their ritualistic worship. They had passed through myriad vicissitudes from time to time. On different occasions, they had been shifted from the Grand Temple to different solitary places for protection of their iconic sanctity. Under such circumstances, the deities must have undergone Nabakalebar rituals when they were re-established on the divine platform of the sanctum. Thus, all that we can say in this regard is that Nabakalebara is necessarily an established function of the Grand Temple. It had always been a recurring spiritual event in the past. It must have taken place in the temple whenever it was necessary to change the images of the deities due to definite reasons.

According to Madala Panji compiled around 1600 AD, King Yajati, for example, had celebrated the Nabakalebar function of the divine images in pomp and ceremony after recovering the deities from a place near Sonpur in Odisha. The spiritual icons had been buried there to save them from destruction by the then sacrilegious Muslim rulers. It is said that when the King

excavated the statues, he found that the statues had been completely decayed and reduced to pieces. He made the new statues in their places according to the prescribed procedure and re-established them on the divine platform.

It may be mentioned in this connection that only Neem wood is preferred to any other wood in the making of the divine statues of the Temple. There is a definite spiritual reasoning in this regard. As described in 'Bhabisya Purana', Neem wood is considered the best and most auspicious wooden material for structuring the statues of Lord Vishnu in general. People of all walks of life, it is believed, can worship these wooden statues shorn of any spiritual restriction. As Lord Jagannath is the spiritual symbol of all sects and all religions, "the statues of the Jagannaths" are preferred to be made of Neem-wood and not of any other wood. Besides, Neem-wood, considered from the scientific point of view, is highly durable. It is ordinarily not destructible due to attack of insects.

According to scriptural expositions in this regard, the Darus of the divine deities are therefore collected from suitable Neem trees. All Neem trees are not suitable for the making of the divine statues. As laid down in this behalf, the Neem trees selected for the divine deities need to have definite divine marks and divine symbols. They should be located at proper places commensurate with specific scriptural specifications. We may discuss these details deity-wise in the following paragraphs:

### 1. The Daru of Sri Jagannath

The tree selected for Sri Jagannath Daru should ordinarily be away from human settlement. It should look dark or dark-red in colour. The trunk of the tree should look straight having four clear branches. The tree, furthermore, should be 7 to 12 cubit high and should have come up near



a river or a pond or on a crossing of 3 path-ways. It is ideal if the tree is surrounded by mountains on three sides. It is good enough if there is a cremation ground or a temple of Lord Siva or at least a hermitage nearby. The tree should be free from creepers. It should also be shorn of nests of birds. At the sometime, it should not have been hit by lightening or affected in any way by storm in the past. Furthermore, there should be an anthill at the foot of the tree. The tree may also have some snake-holes. The Daru tree should be surrounded by trees like 'Varuna', 'Sahada' and 'Bilva'. Besides, the area where the tree has come up should not be swampy or marshy in nature. At the same time, the tree should have the divine marks of Lord Vishnu like Sankha(Conch), Chakra(Disc), Gada(Mace) and Padma (Lotus).

## 2. The Daru of Sri Balavadra

The bark of the tree for Sri Balavadra should look light brown in colour. The tree needs to have seven branches looking like the form of a canopy and the hood of a cobra. The tree should have the divine marks of plough, pestle and the weapons of Sri Balavadra.

## 3. The Daru of Devi Subhadra

The tree meant for Devi Subhadra should look yellow in colour. It should have five clear branches and bear the mark of a lotus flower with five petals.

## 4. The Daru of Sudarsan

The tree meant for Sri Sudarsan should be reddish in colour. It should have three branches. There should be a mark of Chakra on any portion of the tree. The tree should also have a depression in the middle.

These are the various characteristics of the Darus of the four deities. In the process of

selection, the Daru of Sri Jagannath is actually very important. It is required to have a maximum number of characteristics in the order of a perfect selection. The Darus may be collected from the lands of any person irrespective caste and religion. In the Nabakalebar function of 1950, the Daru of Sri Balavadra was collected from the land of a Muslim person. At first, he had denied to part with the tree. But later, on persuasion of his wife, he had agreed to spare the tree free of cost.

## Collection of 'Darus'

We may discuss now the procedure in which the 'Darus' of the divine deities are collected by the servitors. This is known as 'Banayaga Parba' of the Nabakalebar function. In the first instance, a group of able servitors is constituted for this purpose. This group is composed of servitors like Daitas, Patimahapatra, Dadhakaran, Deulakarana, Padiakaran, Maharana, Lenka, Rajguru, some Brahmin servitors along with the other servitors and workers of the Temple Administration.

The procedure pertaining to collection of Darus starts from Chaitra Sukla Dasami i.e the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the bright fortnight of the month of Chaitra. This is to say that this 'Parba' is to start 65 days before the great bathing festival of the deities which takes place on the Jyestha Purnima day. At first, 28 Daitas are selected for the purpose. Out of them, 21 Daitas set out in the journey and the rest seven Daitas stay back in Jagannath Ballav Math Puri. The latter group actually constitutes the 'reserve force'. Their services are utilized as and when it is considered necessary.

As per the prescribed procedure in this regard, the servitors come to the Grand Temple at about 11 O'clock in the morning on the appointed day i.e. on the day after Ramanabami and wait outside the sanctum of the Temple. The



Patimahapatra during this time performs the worship-rituals. He goes up the divine platform and takes four “Ajnamalas” from the four deities, specially prepared for the purpose. Of the four, he gives “Ajnamalas” of Balavadra, Subhadra and Jagannath to the leaders of the respective groups and keeps the fourth one for himself on behalf Sudarsan.

Outside the sanctum, the Bhitarcha Mahapatra (the Store Keeper of the Temple) presents the three Chief-leaders of the Daitas silken sarees of 6-mtr length each. He also presents the other Daitas the silken sarees of the same quality but of 2-mtr length each. Another servitor called the ‘Makup’ applies sandal-paste and red-powder on their foreheads. All these formalities mark the auspicious beginning of their journey in search of the Darus.

Next, the whole party comes out of the Temple to the accompaniment of music and proceeds to the palace of the Raja of Puri situated on the main road. The Raja greets the party in a ritualistic manner. He then offers two metallic plates consisting of auspicious articles like coconuts, areca nuts, some pieces of gold, colored threads, unbroken rice etc to his Rajguru. The Rajguru presents one metallic plate to the Viswabasu, the leader of the Daitas and keeps the other one as the representative of the other Brahmin” members of the party. The entire ritual in this regard has one symbolic meaning. The Raja, through this ritual, authorizes the party to go in search of the Darus. By presenting the auspicious articles, he also wishes the group of the servitors a trouble-free journey in their mission.

The party with the Rajguru next proceeds to Jagannath Ballav Math. There, the members stay for one or two days to chalk out their final preparations. In an early morning after the final preparations are made, the party proceeds to Maa Mangala’s Temple, Kakatpur about 50 km

from Puri. This place is virtually the headquarters of the party. From here, the servitors actually conduct their journey and come back in the evening. In Kakatapur, the party stays in the precincts of Deuli Math belonging to Ramanujiya Vaishnavas and maintained by Emar Math, Puri. A special Puja is conducted in the temple of Maa Mangala by the servitors of the said temple on the occasion of the arrival of the Daitas and the other members of the party.

It may be mentioned here that 3 members of the party namely the Patimahapatra, the Acharya and the Brahmin priest instead of staying in Deuli Math, put up in the temple of Maa Mangala and sleep there for divine directions from the Goddess.

It is believed in this connection that Maa Mangala reveals to one of these servitors in dream the exact location of the Darus. The next day, the Daitas set out in those directions. The members remaining in Mangala Temple recite “Svapnavati Mantra” and the “Mantraraja of Nrushingha” 108 times each before going to bed for the blessings of Mangala in the searching mission. It is further believed that if Mangala does not give any direction within 3 days, the servitors hold a special Puja in the Temple for the merciful blessings of the goddess. The common belief in this connection is that, following the special worship conducted for the purpose, a flower is sure to fall from the head of Maa Mangala indicating the direction of the Darus. The servitors immediately go out in those directions and search out the Darus.

The selection of the Darus is taken up in the following order.

1. Sri Sudarsan, 2. Sri Balavadra 3. Devi Subhadra and Sri Jagannath.

The same principle is followed with regard to transport of the Darus to the Grand Temple.



The search of the Darus may require a couple of weeks.

After identification of the Neem Trees, the servitors build temporary sheds near the trees and stay there. They hold special worships till the trees are cut and readied for being carried to the Grand Temple. A Daru at the time of transport is carried in a wooden cart containing four wheels. The body of the cart is made of “Kendu” wood. Its wheels are made of “Bara” wood. Its axle is made of “Tentuli” wood. Before transport, the Darus are ceremoniously bathed and covered with silken clothes, as if they have life. It is not permissible to have a look at a bare Daru because, as popularly believed, viewing a Daru in that condition is considered a great sin. The Darus are transported in pomp and ceremony from village to village to the accompaniment of various forms of music and ululation. The Raja gets informed when the Darus reach Puri.

If a Daru is carried to Puri through Pipili and Sakhigopala, the concerned cart stops for a while in front of Alama Chandi Temple near Atharanala, the gate-way of Puri. If it is carried through Chaitana road, it halts for a while in front of Nrusingha Temple near Gundicha Ghar. From these places, the Darus are carried along the Grand Road to the Grand Temple through its Northern Gate and finally kept in a temporary shed constructed in Koilibaikuntha within the temple-premises.

### **The Darus in the Temple and obsequies of Daitas**

According to the scriptural procedure, the ‘Darus’ reach the temple before the Snana Purnima day. The Darus are next taken to a temporary shed built in ‘Koilibaikuntha’. The ‘Darus’ are kept here in the same carts in which they are brought to the Temple. Now it is the duty of Patimahapatra to offer special ‘Puja’ to

the Darus till they are finally shifted to the place called “Nirman Mandap.”

On the ‘Snana Purnima day’, the old statues receive the ritual bath on “Snana Mandap” as usual. The ‘Darus’ also simultaneously receive the ritual bath like the old statues on the same Snana Purnima day. One day after Snana Purnima, the ‘Darus’ are taken to Nirman Mandap. It is here, as mentioned above that the ‘Darus’ are fashioned in to new divine statues.

It may be mentioned in this connection, that the month of double-Ashadha is composed of four fortnights. The ‘Anabasara’ period of the Nabakalebar year actually extends over a period of one month and fifteen days. During this span of time, the temple remains closed to the public. As stated above, during the first fortnight, the new statues are carved on the Nirman Mandap in proper procedure. The ‘Brahmapadarthas’ are also transferred from the old statues to the new statues. The second and third fortnights of the Double Ashadha month are known as Mala Masa of the Nabakalebar year. In the second fortnight (i.e. in the first fortnight of ‘Mala Masa), the ‘Daitas’ as the descendants of the Lords, observe the obsequies because of the death of their family Lords. In the third fortnight (i.e. in the second fortnight of Mala Masa) the wooden-skeletons of statues are wrapped up in silken and cotton stripes and the Anabasara customs like Phuluri-Lagi, Khali-Lagi, Khadi-Lagi etc are performed in proper procedure.

Side by side the making of the new statues, the consecration ceremony of the Nabakalebar function is also simultaneously continued in the Grand Temple through the “Nyasa” Daru which is different from the other Darus collected for the divine statues. The ‘Nyasa Daru’ is separately collected (ordinarily) from the Neem tree meant for the statue of Devi Subhadra. This is also brought to the Grand Temple in the



same manner in a wooden cart. The 'Nyasa Daru' may be considered a symbolic representation of the new statues in the making. This is worshipped during the 'Mahanabasara' period in all the ancillary functions relating to the consecration ceremony of the Nabakalebara ritual. The Nyasa Daru therefore remains in use till the new statues are brought to the fore.

The Nyasa Daru is brought to 'Pratista Mandap' on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of the dark-fortnight of Ashadha. This actually marks the beginning of the consecration ceremony. The next day, the Nyasa Daru is ceremoniously consecrated. One of the Rajagurus is nominated by the king to function as the chief priest of this sacred occasion. The king offers the final oblation in the aforementioned sacrifice. A series of special worships are conducted during this occasion in connection with the consecration ceremony. By the 14<sup>th</sup> lunar day, the consecration ceremony of the Nyasa Daru is finally over. The fashioning of the wooden structures of the new images is also completed by this time. In the night of the said 14<sup>th</sup> day, the 'Nyasa Daru' is placed on a small cart and taken around the Grand Temple in its inner precincts 7 times as per the required ritual.

The Nyasa Daru is next taken inside the Temple and handed over to the Daitas. The Daitas (who among them know carpentry), cut the 'Nyasa Daru' into four pieces of the prescribed size and carve them into suitable lids so as to use them to cover the cavities in the belly-portions of the new wooden images containing the 'Brahmapadartha'. These lids are called 'Brahmakapatas'.

In continuation of this function, the newly made images are also taken around the Temple in the night of the next day. The spiritual perambulation like the Nyasa Daru is done in these cases in the same manner in pomp and ceremony. The perambulation is done thrice in the order of Sri Sudarsana, Sri Balaram, Devi Subhadra and

Sri Jagannath one after another. The new images are thereafter taken to the Temple and placed on the Anabasara Pindi near the old statues. It is at this point of time that the 'Brahmapadarthas' are transferred from the old statues to the new images. This is done by the servitors in a very secret procedure. The transfer of 'Brahmapadarth' of Lord Jagannath is done by Patimahapatra. The transfer of Brahmapadarthas in respect of the other deities is done by the Daitapatis. As per the procedure followed in this regard, the servitors conducting the secret ritual are old and experienced persons. Their eyes and hands (up to elbows) are covered with cloth-bands so that they can't touch and see the 'Brahmapadarthas' at the time of their transfer. However, the transfer of the 'Brahmapadarthas' is done at the dead of the night. Before transfer of the 'Brahmapadarthas', a special Bhog is offered to the old deities known as 'Sarabanga Panti Bhog'. This is the last 'Bhog' of the old statues. Raghabdas Math, Puri bears the entire expenditure of the Bhog on this score.

There is a curiosity among the devout devotees to know what this 'Brahmapadartha' is and how does it look like. There are different religious versions on this score. As said above, nobody has seen the 'Brahmapadartha' as yet. The mystery pertaining to this subject is still unraveled. All versions on this secret observance are based on the surmises of the servitors. Some say that the 'Brahmapadartha' is a Buddhist relic. It is a tooth of the Buddha. Some others say that the 'Brahmapadarthas' are the 'Salagramas' of the rarest variety. Many among the servitors also hold the view that the image of Jagannath might have contained the remnants of the Jagannath-statue that was burnt in 1568 by Kalapahada in Huguly which rare thing was brought by a devotee called Biswar Mohanty through his musical drum to Odisha.

Thus noted, the 'Brahmapadarthas' are shrouded in mystery. Everything relating to them



is deemed sacred and secret. Any kind of discussion on the subject is considered religiously prohibitive. It is good enough to know in this connection that the 'Brahmapadarthas' are the most invaluable rarities in the divine sense of the term. Their implication is said to be not within the comprehension of human beings in general.

As soon as the 'Brahmapadartha' is taken out of an image, the same considered dead. It is then loaded in the same cart in which the corresponding new image had been brought in and the same is immediately carried to Kailibaikuntha which is considered the graveyard of the old deities. Here a pit (9 Hastas deep and 6 Hastas in diameter) is kept ready in the midst of a beautiful garden to receive the old wooden images. The pit is spread out with red velvet and the old images are buried here. Not only this, the peripheral deities of the chariots are also sunk here and new deities are made in their places in connection with the requirements of the Ratha Yatra Festival.

Following this ritual, the Daitapatis remain in a state of impurity for a period of ten days. They leave their hair unsaved. They also observe all sorts of obsequies. On the tenth day, they come to the temple and apply oil to their bodies near Mukti Mandap and next proceed to the Markendaya Tank where they cut their hair and nail and observe purifying baths. They also whitewash their houses at the cost of the Temple. The Daitapatis observe all these rituals because the Lord is considered their supreme family member. On the 12<sup>th</sup> day, the Daitas gave a feast to all the servitors of the Temple at their own cost. The wonderful part of this function is that just as the heirs of a deceased person lay claims on the properties of the latter, even so the Daitapatis lay claims on the articles used by "the late statues" after the burial function is over. Normally, the Temple, for this purpose, pays some money to the Daitas by way of compensation. However they take the relics of the old statues like cloth-strips etc. which they mostly sell to the pilgrims

who attach highest religious importance to these objects.

### Netraisava

The wooden forms of the statues are completed by now. Their structures are simply considered as the skeletons of the images. In the beginning of the dark fortnight of the extra Ashadha, these images are entrusted to the care of the temple-servants known as Dutta Mahapatra. Their task is to apply on them different substances by wrapping them up with cloth stripes. This way, they give a final shape to the statues and handover the deities to the Chitrakars. The Chitrakars paint the images within two days (on the 14<sup>th</sup> and the new-moon day of Ashadha) with indigenous colors. They however don't paint the pupils of the eyes of the deities. This work is done by the Brahmin priests on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the bright half of the regular Ashadha with great devotion in the sanctum. This rite is known as Netraisava.

After giving the final touch to the eyes of the deities, the Brahmin servitors bath them (their reflections in the bronze mirrors) with 'Panchamrita'. This bath following the 'Netraisava' has purifying character.

This, in brief, is all about Nabakalebara. This invaluable custom is not in vogue in any other religion. Jagannath Dharma is a unique spiritual philosophy. It includes all sects and all religions. The Nabakalebara ritual emphasizes the Daru-Brahma theory of God which upholds the ritual of Sakara-worship of the all-pervading Nirakara-Brahma. The Lord of the Grand Temple belongs to all. All are his endearing devotees. He is always one from many. The Nabakalebara function is a spiritual pointer to this illustrious mysticism in Jagannath philosophy.

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## Truth, the Divine Wonder

Sudarshan Sahoo

‘Satyat nasti paro Dharmah’ (There is no religion higher than Truth). A religion is proclaimed by a bunch of doctrines suitable for the sustenance of humanity, revealed by a superb brain. Nature’s climax dictator is the focus of thousands of sources of religions around the globe since millennia together. Paths are incalculable to reach the paramount peak. It is only the Sanatan Dharma on the Earth, the epitome of essential gists ever the mankind could conceive, inhibiting the Cosmic Evolution, codified in the Vedas, the compilations of revelations of burning Truths by a

glorious number of sages and perseverants in a range of millennia together, unlike any other source of religion. The first *mantra* of Rig Veda is dedicated to the Creator of infinite Cosmos, “Aum ! Agnimile Purohitam, Yajnasya Deva Ritvijam, Hotaram Ratna Dhatamam.” (Aum ! I pray the Supreme in the Initiation, the

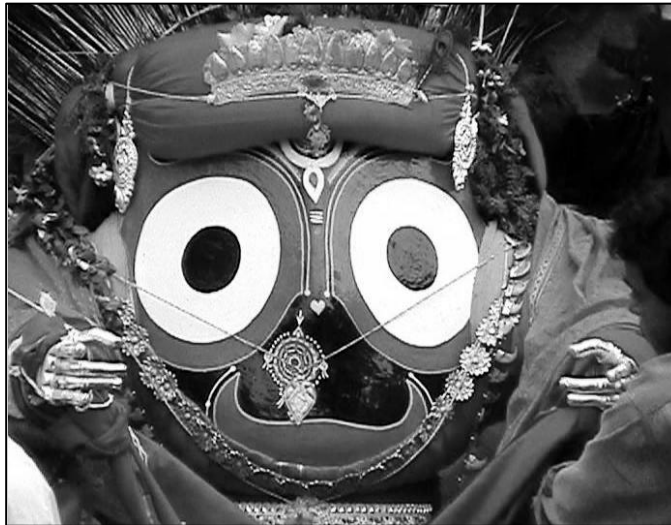
benefactor of the metagalaxy, the performer of the twinkling jewels of infinity.) The mystery of creation is divulged with magnificence beyond comparison in the Rig Veda, said to be codified five thousand years ago and regarded as the oldest volume on the earth. The TRUTH is revealed for

ever that no time-wave can wash it into the abyss of impugment. Prof. Max Muller, the prudent Orientalist, has written,

“Yabat sthasyanti  
girayah saritascha  
mahi tale,  
Tabat Rig Veda  
mahima lokeshu  
pracharishyati.”

(So long the mountains have erected their crests

and the rivers are flowing on the surface of the earth, the magnificence of Rig Veda would be promulgating in the Lokas, i.e. Bhuh, Bhubah, Swah, Mahah, Janah, Tapah and Satyah - the seven abodes.) The Eternal Law of creation, observation and dissolution so perfectly depicted in the Rig Veda that no volume on the earth has a simile to it.





Creation and dissolution is a continuous process, versed in the 8<sup>th</sup> Chapter of Gita. Whence initiation culminated, no hint can be ascertained. It is a great circle of Time as termed in Swetaswatara Upanishad (1:4). Sri Vishnu Purana ( Vol. II, P.6, Ch.3) narrates the *Pralaya* (Dissolution) of three modes : ***Naimittika, Prakrutika and Atyantika***.

***Naimittika Pralaya*** : Poet Jayadev has sung in 'Gita Govinda'- "*Pralaya Payodhi Jale Dhruta Banasi Vedam.....*" It is a great deluge some day in the remote past, narrated in the *Matsya Purana* that Lord Vishnu took the form of a Fish and instructed King Priyabrata for a renovation of the living creatures after the end of the deluge and that was carried out too with the help of a boat, sailing in the waves. It was the *Matsya Avatar* of Lord Vishnu. The academic history volumes are extraordinarily poor to account for these to record the vicissitudes and cataclysms of the earth's convulsions since its formation 13.7 billion years ago. We say, the Rig Veda is of five thousand years' recorded tradition. But the Cosmic Evolution depicted is a rotation of two *Parardhas*- the Term of one Brahma. One *Parardha* (1,00,000,000,000,000,000 years) is Brahma's day time and another is the night time. Gita (8:17) hymns this as two thousand *Mahayugas (Kalpas)*. This happens on this very earth of ours that violent cataclysms take place at certain intervals relating to the globe's axial position at the end of each *Kalpa*, divided by fourteen *Manvantaras*. The globe we live today was not so lakhs of years before. There were two large continents, Lemuria and Atlantis, continuing from South Africa through Indian Ocean, Australia extending upto the southern end of South America where now the great waves of Indian Ocean, Pacific Ocean and Atlantic Ocean tune to their fathomless abyss. The other parts of the earth have heaved up later from the ocean

ground as results of cataclysms. Lemuria was a part of Gondawana Land from which the main land of *Bharat Varsha* detached and moved north-eastwards @ one cm annually and still moving. The great Himalayas has been erected as a result of crustal thrust. Marine objects have been found from Himalayas alike the Sahara Desert in North Africa which was also under the sea some day.

The southern part of present India, approximately the district of Tirunelveli of Tamilnadu and part of Kerala, extended to a land southwards, known as Kumari Kandam; so today the small survived piece, attached to main land is known as Kumarika. High convulsive frequencies near Kumarika zone strangely caused formation of various colored sands in the coasts of this area, which are described in *Puranic* verses as uneaten feast items prepared for the marriage ceremony of Deity Kanya Kumari with Lord Shiva that couldn't be solemnised. Hence, the Deity promised to remain a Virgin for ever and cursed the items to turn into sands. Apart from, this area has been favoured to be the world's most suitable place for varieties of snail-conches, sanctifying the Aryan heritage. The Atlantis-Lemuria (Gondawana Land) continent is submerged under the oceanic depths from where the main stream of esotericism of Aryans flourished and furthered in the land of BharatVarsha, primarily on the fertile lands of Indus-Saraswati-Ganges basin. The Rig Veda profusely and extensively sings the glory of the River Saraswati, linked with the most ancient Indian royal chronicle narrated in *Sri Vishnu Purana*.

The survived scattered islands in the Pacific Ocean belong to very common ancient culture prior to submersion and the different islanders lost to know each other during lapse of lakhs of years, till the arrival of Europeans in the



16<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> centuries. When asked about their centre of worship, all scattered islanders point towards the west (BharatVarsha). They are primarily all Aryans. Today the gigantic mysterious stone-statues of the lonely Easter Island reflect exclamation. But truly, this existing land was the part of a high prosperous zone of esotericism that submerged. One could walk by foot from BharatVarsha straight to reach America. Even upto recent times, one could walk by foot from Rameswaram to Lanka on the Rama Setu till the 13<sup>th</sup> Century.

This present globe has been convulged violently for four times changing human races on it by submersion of land and displacement of inhabitation, apart from six times mid-convulsion and a number of catastrophes vividly at different times. Some times the terrestrial magnetism affects the earth like arrival of a planetary system or departure from. Some times two or three planets disappear at a time exerting tremendous influence on the earth, causing violent geological crust-shiftings and geographical reorganisations. The Atlantis and Lemuria went under the ocean waters 8,50,000 years ago. They bore peak altitudinal races instructed by divine masters and got transferred to the bottom of the sea, where they now slumber until their next appearance above the waters. The divine culture touched the climax when human beings were in contact of Lords of heaven, their body color was like moon. Each root-race of humanity has begun with a Manu; the period being known as *Manvantara*. The first Manu was Swayambhuba Manu. Now we are continuing under the seventh Manu known as Sraddhadeva. The Manus are appointed by the God to govern the universes. The next Manu will be Sabarni in the eighth *Manvantara*, expected to come after 4,00,000 years, when a cataclysm will take place to set a major geographical change. After a great cataclysm, the human civilisation

faces cultural transformation forced by Nature, as the Puranic History reveals. That's why The Gita (4:7,8) hymns,

“ *Yada Yada Hi Dharmasya Glanirbhabati Bharata,  
Abhyutthanamadharmasya Tadatmanam  
Srujamyaham.....* ”

Such was the time when the divinity and physiology were much greater. The inhabitants had giant physical structures and great divine energy with purity of thought in mind. Truth was simply the common code of behaviour. So, it was *Satya Yuga*. There were *Asuras* too. But they had giant physiques and gained no less occult power. When the day of *Pralaya* first approached, land continued to drown due to cataclysm. Lord Vishnu saved the pious creatures and shifted to a new land in *Matsya Avatar*, and today, we sing to the melody of the great poet Jayadev, “ *Pralaya Payodhi Jale.....* ”

The Aryan Culture is as old the as the human race and the very base of human divine knowledge. No source of religion evolved other than Lemuria-Atlantis. All other landed portions on the globe came next step by step as upheaval from the ocean beds and even gone below in some occasions. The north pole, *Sumeru*, was rightly judged by seers as the way to heaven. *Srimad Bhagavatam* says, it was the centre of the *Ilavruta Varsha*. All its portions were golden and the peak was 84,000 *yojans* above the ground. It was like the Lotus centre of the Earth (Canto.5, Ch.16, Sl.7). The Pole Star and the constellation of *Saptarshi* (Great Bear) had their occult-connections with the inhabitants of the earth. The golden summit of snowy *Sumeru Parvat* touched the heavens so that the *Devas* used it as their path to the earth and vice-versa for divine men. In *Baraha Avatar*, the biggest piece of land heaved up from the ocean bed that got inhabited to be a prosperous Aryan settlement.



The Nature's playful pastimes have been sung in the name of the Creator in different *Avataras*. These geological vicissitudes have been depicted in *Brahma Vaibarta Purana* in a divine manner. These are true historical events of the geographical convulsions happened millions of years ago; and also will be happening with certain intervals too.

River *Saraswati*, on the high fertile banks of which the great Vedic Culture flourished, has been hidden totally from its source in the Himalayas to the confluent coast in Gujrat five thousand years back at the juncture hours of *Dwapara Yuga* and *Kali Yuga* due to axial displacement. It was also a moment of geographical cataclysm when many portions of the earth submerged under sea including city of Dwaraka along with west coast of *BharatVarsha*. This river is estimated to reappear to its glorious countenance in next four thousand years owing to axial reset of the globe.

In 1980's French satellite has detected its course, changing four times in lakhs of years, the hints are clear of meagre streaming underneath, now told as "*Antah Salila Saraswati*". Our heartfelt prayers still and will be reverberating in the meadows and snow-peaked crests of the divine Himalayas, "*Ya Kundendu Tushara Hara Dhabala, Ya Shubhra Bastrabrutaa.....*"

Approximately once in four lakh years the global axis that keeps usually 66.5 degrees inclined to its revolutionary plane, gets disturbed to change its inclination either side, causing geological break ups and geographical reconstructions. As such, the globe's surface has been changed several times. The geographical descriptions given in our *Puranas* like *Sapta Sagar* and *Sapta Dwipa* and also the *Astakulachala* hills with *Varshas* in the *Jambu Dwipa* (Srimad Bhagavatam: Canto.5, Ch.16,

Sl.6,7 & 8) are construed to be a pure historical truth.

***Prakrutika Pralaya*** : When Brahma completes his term of two *Parardhas*, the Supreme Being devours the entire cosmos. The term of Brahma ends. Sri Vishnu takes the form of Rudra to turn the whole universe into fire flames. The seven Lokas along with the earth, water, air, sun, moon, stars, sky (the entire cosmos) turn to be red hot whirling flames. The vast Nature comes to a finishing point of effulgence from where it initiated, the *Hiranyagarbha*. Sri Vishnu Purana (2:6:3:26) hymns :

"*Bhubarlokam tatsasarbam swarlokam ca sudarunah, Jwalamala mahavartastatreiba parivartate.*"

( Then the Lord burns the *Bhubah Loka* and *Swah Loka* violently which revolve round like great whirl of effulgence.)

The *Puranic* descriptions not only contain historical informations of grand ancient periods, but astonishingly, the terrestrial discoveries of the modern times too. The ancient seers could conceive the astronomy in understanding the galaxies to revolve round and to be devoured with effulgent-whirlings before they get finished into the darkness. Now the astronomers have discovered it. (News Source : '*Black Hole in Milkway set to swallow cloud of Dust and Gas*'- *The Indian Express*, Washington, 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2012).

The Aryan seers, while depicting the Nature in the volumes, have recorded wonders of the Cosmic extravaganza. Not only the Rig Veda has started with a very short hymn of the Cosmic Evolution, but strangely mentions of interstellar universes (*Brahmandas*) inhabited by creatures of different physiques scattered all around; that the modern science had no conception till the recent times. However the news



of Aliens struck the intellect of the astronomers to search after (News source : 'Earth to contact Aliens in next 12 years ?' *Business Standard, IANS, London, December 26, 2012*). Astronomers have estimated about the possibilities of existence of ten thousand crore of earth-like worlds where living creatures are there in the milkway only and about one sextillion (50,000,000,000,000,000,000,000) in the whole cosmic infinity ( News source : 'Billions of Earth-like worlds could exist- *Royal Astronomical Society-Hispanic Business.com, 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2013*). It is the Truth and Divine wonder only that Rig Veda mentions of it. In SriRamcharita Manas, *Kaka Bhusandi* narrates before *Garuda* how he fled highest into the sky to escape the catch of baby *Sriram* and travelled in different worlds of earth-like stature in the cosmos. Each world had different type of creatures; but *Sriram* being the same everywhere. *Harivansha Purana* writes, "Ananta Koti Brahmanda Tora Garbhe Leena" (Infinite crores of universes are merged in your womb).

These modern scientific discoveries enliven the Hindu ancient volumes. In 2001, *Richard Arnest*, the American Nobel physicist, evoked in the Indian Science Congress, Pune that the ancient Indian volumes are full of scientific facts which should be researched by the Indian scientists instead of running after the Westerners.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2012 *Dr. Brian P. Schimdt*, the Nobel Physicist of 2011 divulged in the 28<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union (IAU) at Beijing that it is only within 100 billion (Ten thousand crore) years the whole Cosmos will finish into the darkness. There will be no stars, no sun, no moon, no sky, no earth, no air, no water nor any celestial existence (News source : 'Top Astronomer Brian P

*Schimdt says Universe will disappear eventually'-The Economic Times, Beijing, 23 AUG, 2012*).

This is the absolute dissolution of the Creation hymned in the Rig Veda (10:90), *Nasadiya Sukta* that in the very Initiation it was only impenetrable Darkness, the insignificant Omnipresent and all-permeating Ocean of Darkness, nothing else existed. When He meditated (intended to create), the Cosmic Evolution startled into formation. The *Hiranyagarbha Sukta* in Rig Veda details step by step the evolution in an absolute scientific way. Its esoteric hymns reveal, 'the Breathless initiated breathing and immense number of universes, the intersteller exuberant extravaganza aired out to formulate the exoteric infinite wonder. The same theme is also depicted in the *Devi Purana, Sri Vishnu Purana, Mundaka Upanishad, Swetaswatar Upanishad, Gita* and almost all *Puranic* volumes.

Thus, the stature of the Unknown is prayed by *H P Blavatsky*, the founder of 'The International Theosophy Society' at New York (1875) in her immortal volume, 'The Secret Doctrine', published in 1888 :

"Nor Aught nor Naught existed; Yon bright sky  
Was not, nor heaven's broad roof outstretched above.  
There was not death - yet there was naught immortal,  
There was no confine betwixt day and night;  
The only one breathed breathless by itself,  
Other than It there nothing since has been.  
Darkness there was and all at first was veiled  
In gloom profound - an ocean without light."

x x x x x x x

The above lines (part of stanza) of *Blavatsky* are the cream of the Vedic Hymns, essence of all the Upanishads and the Puranic concentrations, assimilating the entirety of 1200 religion sources prevalent around the globe.



This is the *Prakrutika Pralaya* when the Creator dissolves everything into Him and rejoices to an infinite slumber. **It is His ultimate being and the supreme stature, the unevolved and the purest entity - 'The Darkness'.**

**"Jay Jagannath !"**

It is why He is the Lord of the Universe. HE is not a statue of neem wood to be renewed in each 8,12 or 19 years. It is the replica of the great Truth of mortal bodies of all creatures they relinquish for an eternal journey on a new chariot each time. Soul is immortal as anthropomorphic part of Him, the *Jiva* (Gita-15:7).

***Atyantika Pralaya*** : The third and last pastime of soul is the Ultimate assimilation. The Soul has started its journey from Him and He is the Ultimate Abode of Eternity. *Jiva* is attached with *Karma* which causes it either to roam in the worldly forest or to return to the eternal abode of Peace. Plenty of luxurious worldly enjoyments allure the *Jiva* to devour sensuality. He prays gods for material happiness; and truly, the world turns to be a golden cage for him. The Yogis, Rishis and sages whose instinct search after the Truth, relinquishing all types of worldly attachments to keep free from, succumb to internal happiness, envision the Supreme in each creature and all in Him, enjoin their souls with the Supreme through strict austerity, surpass the *Maya (Avyakta)* and achieve Brahma Nirvana (Gita-5:24,25 and 26), either during this life time or at the end. Their souls rejoice into the *Atyantika Pralaya*. These souls have no rebirth.

In Katha Upanishad, Nachiketa refused all kinds of worldly offers from Yama and remained unstirred to know about the Param Brahma. All the esoteric volumes have denied to open free the secret knowledge here and there, unless the receiver is a concretely ardent one to conceive. The ultimate goal of a roaming soul is

to return to the shelter. Whoever keeps alert in it, is called a learned one. He avenues with austerity by detaching himself from the worldly seductions. Yama revealed the Supreme knowledge to Nachiketa, the bridge of nectar to *Atyantika Pralaya*.

A drop of water from the ocean loses its whereabouts when dropped into. Likewise, the pure souls, free from sensual attachments, are attracted towards the Ocean and they flow like rivers running towards the infinite Ocean to meet the confluence losing their individual identity. Such excerpt is depicted in the Mundaka Upanishad (3:2:8).

This is known as *Moksha*, the ultimate assimilation or the *Atyantika Pralaya*. Srimad Bhagavatam (12:7:17) speaks of four kinds of *Pralayas*. The extra one, apart from the three above, is placed in the third position named as *Nitya Pralaya*, the relinquishing of the mortal body for a rebirth.

The cycle of Cosmic Evolution and Dissolution is a perpetual continuity that the records are beyond possibility to be codified. Still the Aryans have maintained it as a memorial tradition, the *Shruti*, from time immemorial and codified it in the possible signs and alphabets, as to say, since last five thousand years. The foremost recorded document is the Rig Veda, written in the *Prakruta* language with even some incomprehensible signs and notations. Adi Sankaracharya, the gifted Soul from heavens, austered to the deepest to conceive the revelations hinted in the Vedic scriptures and translated into the Sanskrit language during his succinct life span of 32 years (788-820 AD). At many places, he has got confused in achieving the true sense; hence explaining the meaning as 'might be this or that'. Any way, The Vedas are the eye openers of the mankind to the Creator in



Sanskrit Language today. Had Adi Sankaracharya not been sent by God to this earth, the textual physique of Vedas would have been diminished, being delinked from this materialistic world of today. It is the Sanskrit Language that has conjugated the mankind with divinity. It is the most perfect, alconcrete and super dialectical language on the earth.

‘The Asiatic Society’ was founded by Sir William Jones in 1784 in Calcutta under the presidentship of Lord Warren Hastings, the first Governor General of India. This organisation was meant to research the cultural history of the South-East Asia zone. Sir William Jones in his third annual discourse expressed, *“The Sanskrit Language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure, more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin and more exquisitely refined than either.”* H P Blavatsky, the founder of ‘The International Theosophy Society’, has quoted in ‘The Secret Doctrine’, *“minds of the first races endowed with Consciousness by those who reflected the same from the Universal mind- is daring, for no human language, Save the Sanskrit-which is that of the Gods-can do so with any degree of adequacy”* (Vol.I, p.269).

Scientific development involves accentuated altitudes of expression in its discoveries to the extreme minute observations.

Dr. Rick Briggs, a NASA Scientist, ardent in cosmogonic researches has written, *“The Language of the Vedas, Sanskrit, is the most perfect language for scientific expression because of its conciseness and unambiguity. Its eloquence is well known, yet Sanskrit is little appreciated in modern times.”*

The soul traverses through four steps: *Jagaritah, Swapnah, Sushuptih and Turiyah* every day. The first three steps are enjoyed to our mundane knowledge. During *Sushuptih* the mind remains absolutely free from all thoughts, the worldly pain-pleasures. It is the pure moment the soul achieves the *Turiyah, the Param Brahma, the Truth (Mandukya Upanishada)*.

He is the End and He is the Initiation; and in between, He is the infinite slumber of Darkness, the ever victorious Truth; is eternal, or naught, so long the Cosmic mystery replicates into the infinity, whispers into the metagalactic sextillion of living universes that the Vedas hymn and smiles the Epitome of Darkness, the five elemented Brahma, beyond and above *Kshara* and *Akshara* - Purushottama; The Divine Wonder : Jagannatha !

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## The Ritual System

*Sarat Chandra Mohapatra*

Every Hindu temple has a ritual system prescribed according to scriptures like *pancharatra agama*, *vaikhanasa agama*, *sarada tilaka* and other appropriate scriptures. Jagannath temple is a peculiar Hindu shrine where Vaisnavite, Saivite and Sakta elements have been embodied in a ritual system. Some scholars are of opinion that Lord Jagannath is worshipped in three *dhupas* (food offerings) and five *avakasas* (change of dress and decoration etc.). It is called *astakala pujapaddhati* propounded by Vallabhacharya on Vaisnavite ritual of Lord Srikrishna as a cowherd boy rising from the bed in the morning, getting fed and decorated, going with the cattle along with the friends, amorous play with Radha and Gopies, dance and music, etc. are the daily rituals of Srikrishna. Such system has been reflected in the ritual order of Jagannath temple partially. But interestingly Saiva and Sakta elements have been so inextricably blended with the ritual system which can be said to be unique of its kind. It is a third system (Trutiya Pantha) strictly not Dakhinachara of Vaisnavas or Bamachara of Saktas.

The ritual system or Niti of Lord Jagannath is very elaborate, spreading over 118 categories of *sevayats* or servitors throughout the year to perform their specified Seva according to turn (*Bedha patra*). The *Niti* or the ritual system is so much interlinked with each other that unless a particular service is performed, the next service cannot take place. The entire ritual system is divided into three categories. They are daily

routine rituals periodical on special occasions according to almanac or *panji* and festivals. Daily Nitis are fixed and observed everyday as of routine course. Special or periodical Nitis are according to speciality and occurrence on certain days, month, stars (*Nakshatra*), eclipse or in other mishaps in the temple. Number of festival Nitis is observed during the year both outside like Gundicha and Chandan Jatra and inside the temple. *Madala Panji*, the daily temple chronicle is the main source of such Nitis. There are some secret Nitis of Nabakalebara and Anavasara, which have been prohibited by scriptures for publicity and publication.

### Daily Nitis (Rituals)

Excepting in the month of *Kartika* (October-November) and *Pausa* (December-January) when *Bala Bhoga* and *Pahili Bhoga* (early morning food offering) are held, the doors of the temple are open at 5 a.m. called as *Dwaraphitha*, for which besides the main servitor Bhitarchu Mahapatra, seven other categories of *sevakas* are required. After cleaning the inner sanctuary called Bhitarasodha, *Mangala Alati* is held in three phases i.e. Camphor (*Karpura Alati*), by Ghee Wigs (*Balita Alati*) and by Pasted Rice (Pithau Alati). Then the deities are dressed with Tadapa (a kind of thin cloth) and Uttariya (an upper garment; like a napkin). At 6.30 a.m. *abakasa niti* is held. In this ritual the deities are symbolically offered stick for washing of the teeth through a brass mirror and take bath with



curd etc. over the mirrors placed in front of the deities. After *abakasa* the deities are adorned with silken cloths, flowers and ornaments, after which *Sahana Mela* or *Sarva Sadharana Darshan* (free entry of pilgrims to the inner sanctuary) takes place. It provides an opportunity to devotees and pilgrims to go near the Ratna Singhasana to have a closer view of the deities and circumbulation (*pradakhina*) of the *Ratnasinghasana*. If during this time any person touches the holy bodies, spits, passes stool or urine or vomits, then the deities are given a purificatory bath called *Mahasnana*. There is provision for penalty on the person for doing so. Usually children of tender age are not allowed to go inside. From 8 a.m. to 8.30 a.m. the deities are dressed in different coloured dresses prescribed for different seasons and occasions.

Simultaneously in the meantime *roso homo* or putting sacred fire in the kitchen, *Surya Puja* (Worship of the Sun God) and *Dwarapala Puja* (worship of the door guarding deities – Jaya and Vijaya) are held. Then the breakfast is offered to the Lords called *Gopal Ballava Bhoga*. It consists of sweets, fruits, curd, butter, green coconut, sweetened coconut balls (laddu), plantains, Khua Manda (cream ball) and Ballava Khai (twice fried rice mixed with ghee and sugar) etc.

The next cooked food offering to the Lords is known as *Sakala Dhupa* or *Raja Bhoga*. Besides the rice of different varieties, the cakes of black gram (*biri*) and other prescribed items are served in limited quantities and number. Then the deities change their dresses, decorated and take the next food offering called *Bhoga Mandapa* in the refractory hall behind Garuda stambha. This Bhoga or food offering has been introduced to cater Mahaprasad to the pilgrims, various Matha and other institutions, private individuals in huge quantities. This is mainly meant for sale.

*Madhyanha Dhupa* or principal mid day Bhoga is offered at 1 p.m. in which different types of rice, pulses, vegetables and variety of cakes are offered. District Gazetteer (Pp.809) records that 435 food items were offered in this *dhupa* in 1910. It consists of rice of various kinds, pulses and vegetables with varieties of cakes and sweets. Then the deities retire for a mid-day siesta (*diba pahuda*) after being offered green coconut, perfumed water and beetle nut. They get up at 6 p.m. when *Sandhya Alati* or evening offering of sacred lamp in camphor, ghee wigs and pasted rice is done. The devotees and pilgrims eagerly stand awaiting to see this ritual.

At 8 p.m. *Sandhya Dhupa* or night food offering is served which consists of ghee rice (*gheeanna*) and fragrant sweetened soaked rice (*subasa pakhala*), sweets, cakes of black gram, etc. Then at 9.15 p.m. the Gods appear for public Darshan. The Gods then change dresses after being smeared with fragrant sandal paste mixed with *Karpura* (camphor), *Keshar* and *Kasturi* in silver pots called *Chandan Lagi*. At 10.30 p.m. the deities again change their dresses and wear *Baralagi Pata* (the silken cloth with prescribed colour of the day). The Lords are then decorated with flower decoratives called *Chandrika* on head, *Nakachana* on nose, *Karapallava* on hands and *padaka* on the chest along with lots of other flower garlands. Some selected stanzas of Gita Govinda, composed by Odia poet Jayadev are woven on the body of the saree called *Gita Govinda khandua*, which the Lords put on during this ritual. After that *Bada Singhara Dhupa* or last food offering takes place. A particular cake prepared by green banana called *Kadali Bada*, *pitha* of black gram, *khiri* (milk made sweetened item), *kanji* (a curd preparation), soaked rice, etc are offered in this Dhupa. The last rite is at 12 p.m. when the musical instruments like veena and drum are played with Gita Govinda music, dance by Mahari or



Debadasi, *puspanjali* (offering of flower) is held. The golden cots are brought inside and the *Sayana Thakura* or the sleeping deities (*Ardhanariswara* – a composite figure of Lord Vishnu and Laxmi) are brought to Jaya-Vijya Dwara (entrance door to the inner sanctuary) where green coconut, fragrant water (*ghasa jala*) and beetlenut are offered and the deities retire to sleep. The doors are closed and sealed by Talichu Mahapatra, a specific servitor with this responsibility. All people inside the temple premises are made to go out except the security people. This is in brief the daily routine rituals of the Gods. Now of course the *Diba Pahuda* or the mid day siesta is periodically done particularly during the months of *Kartika* and *pausa* when the deities rise very early in the morning.

### Periodical Nitis (Rituals)

On Thursday or *Gurubar*, the festive deities of Lord Jagannath, Madanmohan goes to the temple of Goddess Mahalaxmi for *ekanta* or exclusive meeting rituals.

According to constellation of stars (*suanakashera*), specific rituals are performed. According to astrological calculations following are the birth stars of the deities.

|                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Sri Balabhadra   | – Shrabana Makara. |
| Sri Jagannath    | – Rohini Brusha.   |
| Goddess Subhadra | – Jyestha Bichha.  |

On each *Ekadasi* or the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the month, after *sandhya dhupa* lamps are taken to the top of the temple and circumbulated around Nilachakra called *Mahadipa*. The devotees particularly the widows who observe *ekadasi* by fasting etc. wait to see this rituals after which they are supposed to take food. *Ekadasi niti* also varies according to days on which it falls. If it falls on a Thursday some specific Nitis are performed, called *Danda-Chhatra Niti* and if it falls on a Monday it is called *Sambhu-Ekadasi* and Nities

are performed by Sri Madan Mohan going to Sri Loknath Temple.

*Amabasya niti* (last day of dark fortnight) is very interesting and reflects a typical Hindu social custom of son-in-law visiting the house of the father-in-law. The sacred sea or *Mahodadhi* is believed to be the house of the father in law of Lord Jagannath. Narayana, the representative of Lord Jagannath goes on this day to the seashore near *Swargadwara* where some prescribed rituals of offering of *bhoga* and *bandapana* are done by Sabat Nijoga, a particular class or servitors earmarked for performing this ritual.

*Banaka Lagi* or *Srimukha sringara* or painting of the deities is performed by a particular class of servitor called Datta Mahapatra. Once in a week either on Wednesday or Thursday the deities are painted in white, yellow and black by indigenous colours. The sanctum-sanctorum remains closed and no other person is allowed to go inside. This ritual takes more than 2 hours and done through 5 to 6 servitors of Data Mahapatra group.

*Benta* or sikara (hunting) – it is one of the interesting ritual done on *Basant Panchami* day and in three other days in a year signifying the royal status of the Lord. He being worshipped as a Supreme Sovereign King, some rituals are in tune with the royal status. *Benta* or going for hunting is one among them. Here the representative of the Lord Sri Dola Govinda goes to Jagannath Ballava Math, the pleasure garden of Lord Jagannath. There is a pond inside the Math called *Benta Pokhari* or hunting pond. On the bank of the pond green coconuts are placed symbolizing the hunting prey Deers. *Benta Paika* a class of servitors pierces with golden arrows on behalf of the Lords.

Solar and Lunar eclipses – When it takes place special Nitis are observed in the temple.



### Festival Nitis (Rituals)

There are more than 65 festivals or festive Nitis celebrated during a calendar year. Famous among them are 12 festivals or *Dwadasa-Yatra* prescribed in *Niladri Mohadaya*. They are Deba Snana Purnima in Jyestha Purnami, Gundicha or Ratha Yatra in Ashada Sukla Dwitiya (2<sup>nd</sup> day of bright fortnight of July, Sayana Ekadasi in Ashada Sukla Ekadasi (11<sup>th</sup> day of bright fortnight of July), Dakshinayana Sankranti, Uttarayana, Parsvapari-bartan, Utthapana, Pravaraana, Pusya Puja, Dolo, Damanaka Utsava and Chandan Yatra.

But in practice as codified in the report of the special officer (1952) contains a list of 65 festivals. Important among them which attracts the pilgrims are the Gundicha Yatra or Car Festival, which occurs in Ashada-Sukla Dwitiya (June-July). A detailed account of the festival is given hereafter. The other important festive Nitis observed in the temple are:- Herapanchami, Sayan Ekadasi, Garudasayana Dwadasi, Chitalagi, Jhulan Jatra, Chandan Jatra, Dussehra, Dol Jatra (Holi), birth ceremonies of Nrusingha, Srirama, Srikrishna and Bamana, Ganesh Chaturthi, Radhastami, Rushi Panchami, Dipavali, Shiva Ratri, etc.

Besides the elaborate prescribed rituals in the main temple of Lord Jagannath there are a number of subsidiary Shrines all around the temple to whom Bhoga and other contributions are sent. Such subsidiary deities are 94 in number as contained in the Record of Rites.

Besides the subsidiary shrines inside the temple there are a number of temples outside the temple precincts that receive daily Bhoga and other materials like Sarees etc. From among them mention can be made about Dakshina Kali, Shyama Kali, Bedi Hanuman, Nrusingha, Bisweswari, Charchika, Marichika and others.

The Bhogas or the food offerings for the deities in the main temples are prepared in the main Kitchen of Lord Jagannath while for other subsidiary deities in the '*Bahara Deuli Roso*' (kitchen for outside deities) behind Surya Temple. The Bhoga materials to be supplied by the temple administration from *laxmi bhandar* or the Godown adjacent to the temple of Goddess Mahalaxmi for the prescribed bhogas (*kotho bhoga*) and subsidiary deities. Many changes have taken place in course of time in dealing with the food materials of the deities. For performance of such elaborate daily, periodical and festive Nitis of the deities, huge expenditure and materials are needed for which the Gajapati kings have endowed movable and immovable properties and the Maths were burdened with the ritual responsibilities. But with the change of situation now the temple administration is almost meeting all expenses.

Performance of Nitis in the temple and offering of Bhoga to the deities has a direct linkage with the pilgrims and devotees of the town eagerly waiting for Mahaprasad. Beginning from uninterrupted supply of earthen containers (*handi* and *kudia*), fuel wood and large quantities of rice, vegetables and ghee, etc., timely cooking by large number of cooks and performance of *Sodosoupachara Puja* (offering of Puja in sixteen materials) are the basic presuppositions for the regularity of performance of Nitis and offering of Mahaprasad. A slight disruption in one of the ingredient shall cause delay in the entire chain of *nitis*. Many reforms are being thought of to ensure timely performance of *nitis* which will have a positive impact on the pilgrims who usually come for twin purposes of seeing the Lord, taking Mahaprasad and pay homage in Mohadadhi, the sacred sea.

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## Concept of Sri Jagannath and Patitapaban

*Janaki Ballav Pattanayak*

The meaning of Sri Jagannath is Lord of the Universe. So question comes to our mind that who is the Lord of Universe? He must be personified. To reach in this conclusion (Siddhanta) we must look towards the authentic scriptures of India. The National Scripture of our Mother India is Srimad Bhagabat Geeta and the highest of all scriptures is Srimad Bhagabatam, both have declared that 'Krishnastu Bhagaban Swayam'. Sri Krishna is the highest personality of Godhead. Anyone can see this conclusion everywhere mentioned in these two scriptures. Leaving this two Sri Vishnupuran - 5/7/58, 5/33/41, Skanda Puran, Utkalakhanda 19/37, 19/40, 27/86, 31/86, 33/71, Brahman Puran Sri Purusottam Mahatmya Chapter 1 to 8 verse, Niladri Mahoday, 8/27, 28 & 29, Bamdev Samhita 6/11, 8/26 and Sri Kapila Samhita 3/2 and 27 may be referred to establish the truth. All



scriptures say that Sri Krishna is Jagannath. Sri Krishna and Jagannath both are same and one. There is no difference between Sri Krishna and Jagannath. Lord Jagannath appeared in human form as Sri Krishna and Sri Krishna's archa deity worshipped in Puri Srimandir is known as Sri

Jagannath. Lord Jagannath is worshipped in Sri Gopal (Krishna) Mantra which is specifically mentioned in Niladri Mahodaya 8/27, 28, 29, 54. So where is the legitimacy of saying that Sri Krishna is one Kala (part) of Sri Jagannath. Some say that it is written in Sri Jagannath Charitamrita that "Sri Jagannath Sola Kala, Tahun Kalae Nanda Bala."

Actually the above stanza is not written anywhere in our Odia Bhagabat and in Sri Jagannath Charitamrita.

Those who are saying 'Tahun Kalae Nanda bala' (Krishna is the part of Sri Jagannath), it is also not the conclusion of any authentic scriptures as noted above. It is only



imagination or speculation. Rather it is exaggeration and contrary to the opinion of the Geeta and Bhagabat. In Srimad Bhagabat 10/14/39 Brahma said to Sri Krishna that 'Twameba Jagatam Natho': you are the Lord of Universe. Bhagabat Geeta says that Sri Krishna is "Deva Deva Jagatpate" (God of Gods, O Supreme person, Lord of Universe) 10/5, 'Ananta devesa Jaganibash' (O limitless one ! O refuge of the universe) 11/37, "Prasida devesha Jaganibasha" (O Lord of Lords, O Sanctuary of the universe) 11/45 and 'Matah Parataram nanyat Kinchidasti Dhananjaya' (O Dhananjaya Arjuna there is nothing superior to me).

Thus Sri Krishna is Sri Jagannath. It is the highest conclusion of all scriptures. Sri Jayadev Goswami, the author of Geeta Govinda, Sri Adi Sankaracharyapad in his Jagannathastakam and Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and all most all Odia Poets have opined that Sri Krishna and Jagannath are one. Sri Jayadeva in his Dasavatar stotra (Geeta Govinda) has established that Sri Bamandev, Sri Nrishingha Dev and Lord Sri Rama all are the incarnations of Sri Keshaba, Krishna 'Keshaba dhrita dasabidharupa, Jaya Jagadisha Hare'. Keshaba is the Lord of universe. On the other hand Sri Krishna is the Chief and original name of Sri Jagannath and He feels happy and becomes overpleased, if we call Him as 'Jaya Krishna Jagannath' (Utkala Khanda 27/86 and 31/86).

Some historians believed that Sri Jagannath is Buddha. But the worship of Sri Jagannath at SriKshetra Puri is most prior to Gautam Buddha. Puri is an ancient Vaishnava Kshetra. The most ancient literature of the world is Rig Veda. In this Veda it is recorded that 'Ado ja daru plabate' (10/155/3), so this Daru Brahma (Brahma - Supreme Godhead manifested in wooden form) is Sri Jagannath.

Goutam Buddha was the son of Sudhodan and Mayadevi who was born at Lumbini of Kapilabastu, whereas Buddha the 9th incarnation of Sri Krishna Vishnu appeared in Kikatapradesh (i.e. Gaya) accepting Hema Sadan and Anjani respectively as His father and Mother. (Bhagabat 1/3/24). Gautam's birth Tithi (date) is Vaisakha Purnima and 9th incarnation Buddha's birth Tithi is Pausa Sukla Saptami, so both are different. For non acceptance of Veda Gautam is recognized as an atheist (Nastika). Acharya Sankar and Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu refuted the atheistic Buddha opinion. Buddha Gaya the Vishnua Tirtha converted to a Buddha Tirtha by the highly influential preaching of Baudha Dharma. By meditating under the Bodhidruma (tree) the place of meditation of the 9th incarnation of Buddha, Gautam attended the enlightenment which reveals from the 21 chapter of Lalita Bistar book. From Lalita Bistar and Lankavatar Sutra it also reveals that there were 3 Buddhas, viz. - (1) Man - Gautam Buddha (ii) Bodhisatwa Buddha (iii) Adi Buddha. It is recorded in a verse of Lankavatar Sutra that Ravan the King of Lanka was praying to Adi Buddha. Hence it is proved that atheist Gautam Buddha is in no way can be considered as 9th Avatar Buddha, so it is the true and climax conclusion of the scriptures and as well as the declaration of Jayadeva's 'Dasavatara Stotra' that Sri Krishna Jagannath is the supreme personality of Godhead 'Avatari' from whom all incarnation are coming to this earth in a deductive way. So we are clear about Sri Jagannath. Now we may proceed to discuss shortly about the name Patitapaban of Sri Jagannath.

The meaning of Patitapaban is purifier of fallen souls. According to historians - previously Kalinga or Odisha was the land of tribals (Savaras) and first they were worshipping the single deity of Sri Jagannath as Patitapaban i.e.



the deity mainly adored by the Patitas the downtrodden people. Pure devotees also considered themselves as Patita very smaller than a grass and devotionally recites the name of Patitapaban at the time of perceiving Sri Jagannath.

In Odisha the small and single deity of Sri Jagannath worshipped without Sri Balaram and Subhadra is known as Patitapaban or Dadhi Baman. But the Patitapaban sits inside the lion gate of Puri Srimandir towards right hand side of the entrance is different from other Patitapaban or Dadhibaman deities worshipped in other places of Odisha. Here (at Puri), He has no arms, only face is manifested. History says that the then Khurda and Puri King Gajapati Ramachandra Dev-II fought his best with Mussolims who attacked Odisha at that time was lastly defeated. The Mussolim Ruler kept the Gajapati in prison at Cuttack Barabati Fort with a condition to marry a Mussolim girl. After thinking much Gajapati accepted the proposal externally only with fear to protect Sri Jagannath and His temple. After his return from Jail he repented much but he was not allowed by the Hindus to enter into Puri Srimandir.

He cried much out of devotion and heartily prayed to Sri Jagannath to redeem him from the dilemma position of Patita and give him His Darsan. By the deep devotion of Sri Gajapati Maharaj, Mahaprabhu was not able to stay within His temple. He understood the heart of the king. Mahaprabhu rushed towards the Lion's gate to see His devotee. Next day morning worshippers of the temple were surprised to see the flowers and ornaments of the Lord scattered everywhere

on the way between the Ratna Singhasan (Jewelled throne) and the Lion's Gate.

In dream to the main worshipper (Bada Panda) the Lord said that he is dissatisfied with the decision for not allowing His devotee King into the temple. So every day in mid night, He was going to the Lion's Gate to give His Darsan to the Gajapati. After this the Patitapaban deity was installed there for Darsan by Sri Ramachandra Dev-II and for all other Patitas who are not allowed to enter into the temple. Some says that by the devotion of Mussolim born devotee Salabega, Mahaprabhu also come near to the Lion's Gate to see His devotee. Sri Jagannath manifested himself at the Lion's Gate of Puri Srimandir in Patitapaban form to give His Darsan to all and particularly to fallen and downtrodden, untouchable devotees like Sri Dasia Bauri.

The fluttering flag on Nilachakra of the Srimandir is also known as Patitapaban Bana which is identical with the Lord. Those who are fallen and not allowed to enter into the temple they can see it from outside to get benefit of seeing the Lord. The main Patitapaban deity along with the Srimandir, Nilachakra and the Patitapaban flag all are equally empowered to remove the Sins from the heart of everyone.

Lastly, it may be concluded that Sri Jagannath and Patitapaban are synonymous.

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Janaki Ballav Pattanayak, Budhi Bagicha,  
Samantarapur, Po/Dist.- Khurda.





## The Famous Car Festival of Puri

*Rabindra Kumar Behuria*

The historic Car Festival of Puri in Odisha is an important facet of Hindu civilisation in Indian Peninsula since ages. It is important because it annually registers global brotherhood and offers an unprecedented access to the humanity at large to come closer to the divinity. Man and God and God and Man become one in the Ratha Jatra. No distinction in whatever form exists.

The Car Festival of Lord Jagannath, Puri is a popular Festival celebrated all over the world. Even in Communist country like Russia, a city has been named as 'Purusottam Kshetra' and festival is observed with intense enthusiasm by the mass. The ISKCON devotees have spread the message of the Lord all over the world and by the year 1997, in 62 foreign countries this festival is observed.

S o m e historians ascribe the origin of the Car Festival to Buddhist Convention.

Fa-hien, the Chinese traveller in 4<sup>th</sup> century have described the Car Festival in Khotan, a city in West China, where the image of Buddha was installed in chariot, and the king of Khotan used to sprinkle water and sweep the chariot in broomstick. It was observed in the month of June, which synchronizes with the period of Car Festival at Puri. He has also seen the Car Festival at Pataliputra on the birth day of Buddha. From such historical evidences this scholar infer that Car Festival at Puri have its source from Buddhism.





The Rig Vedic sloka runs thus:

*'A Krushnena Rajasubartamano  
Nibartayam mamrutam Martyam cha  
Hiranmayena Sabita Rathena  
Debo Jati Bhuvanani Pashyan'*

In Ramayana and Mahabharat there is mention of Ratha in number of times. Ratha or Chariot was in an insignia of aristocracy used by royal order. Artha Sashtra of Kautilya (4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.) mentions about the cars used by Gods. In Odisha Car Festival of Lord Lingaraj is observed in Bhubaneswar, in the month the Chaitra (April-May) on Ashokastami day. During the said month the Car Festival of goddess Minakshi is also observed in Madurai (Tamilnadu). In case of Goddess Biraja in Jajpur, the Car Festival is also celebrated in the month of Ashwin (September – October).

The Puranic and Scriptural references on Ratha or Chariot lead to inescapable conclusion that 'Ratha' is basically Hindu concept, which has been adopted by different religious communities with regional variations in different parts of India, traceable from a remote antiquity. In the early Christian era of 2<sup>nd</sup> Century, the chariots are depicted in sculptural art at Amaravati, Buddha Gaya and Kerala, as the seated Sun God is drawn in Chariot.

During the period of Eastern Ganga king Chodaganga Deva, the builder of Jagannath Temple and his illustrious successor Anangabhimha III (1211-1238 A.D). Lord Jagannath was given the status of State Deity and entire temple was dedicated as Purosottam Samrajya. The sculptural description of Ratha or Chariot, with twenty four-wheels at Konark, as has been said earlier, suggests the popular and religious acceptance of Ratha or movement of deities on Ratha ceremonially. Many foreign and non-Hindu

scholars have described the Car Festival in their own way as far as back 1321 A.D.

The Muslim historian Abul Fazl describes about Jagannath Temple in the following manner:

“In the town of Purusottam on the bank of the Sea, stands the temple of Jagannath, where the three images of Lord Krishna. His brother and sister are installed. They are washed six times every day and freshly clothed; fifty or sixty Brahmin Priests are used to be on their feet in their service and each time they are washed and made to new garments. They are made an offering of large dishes of food, the leavings of which are taken by twenty thousand people. The Brahmins at certain times carry the image in procession upon a carriage of sixteen wheels, which in the Hindu Language is called Ratha, and they believe that whoever assists in drawing it along obtains remission of all his sins.”

Alexander Hamilton who visited Puri in 1708 A.D. has furnished a second-hand report on the Car Festival and has mentioned: Jagarynat's effigy is carried abroad in procession, mounted on a coach four storeyed high and people fell flat on the ground to have the honour to be crushed to pieces by each wheel.'

After the British occupation of Orissa, Harcourt visited Puri and witnessed the car festival in 1805. According to him the Festival was witnessed by at least five lakhs of people. He says: “I was astonished at the order and regularity preserved. There was not the least tumult or disposition to violence.”

James Fergusson witnessed the Car Festival in 1837 A.D. He published his impressions in his book 'picturesque illustrations of Ancient Architecture in Hindustan' in 1847 A.D. as follows: I was most agreeably disappointed to find



the pilgrims hurrying to the spot talking and laughing, like people going to a fair in England, which in fact, it is." He saw no victims crushed under the wheels of the Chariot.

Charles Grome, the collector of Jagannath (Puri) in 1805 and George Webb, the collector of Cuttack in 1807 at the behest of Governor General in council made exhaustive probe in respect of the management of the temple of Lord Jagannath which included various modes of ritual worship, temple revenues, the role of Mathas, the inflow of pilgrims to Puri, the structure of the prevailing pilgrim tax etc in a rational manner. No disrespect was shown by them. The British even honoured the Raja of Puri as the Superintendent of the Temple and as the first servitor of Lord Jagannath by 1809, the practice which was said to have been discontinued since 1760 A.D. during the Marahatta rule.

The Ratha Yatra of Puri is to be historically analysed to trace its origin. Eminent historians like Dr. S.N. Rajguru, Prof. K.S. Behera, Dr. Herman Kulke and many others tender divergent views. Many other Odia, Sanskrit and Hindi literary works contain descriptions of Car Festivals. Out of such huge number of Literary works, a few can be cited as very popular work, 'Basantotsava Kavyam' of Haladhar Mishra (17<sup>th</sup> Century), 'Gundicha Champu' of Bakravak Chakrapani Pattanaik, 'Gundichautsava Vernanam' of Bhaguveta Brahma and Gundicha Vije, of the 18<sup>th</sup> century by poet Brajanath Bada Jena, Pandit Narahari composed a commentary on the Meghadutam of Kalidas, entitled Brahma Prakasika Tika, in which he interpreted the text in the light of the Car-Festival of Lord Jagannath. In the Ganga-Vamsanucharitam by Vasudev Rath (18<sup>th</sup> Century) an interesting description of the festival is given. The Odia poet-philosophers of Mediaeval Orissa, including Salabega, a Muslim

devotee, have expressed through poetry, their poignant visions of Lord Jagannath and the glory of the Car-Festival.

Many other foreign travellers like Mohammad-Bin-Amirwala (1626), W. Brutton (1633), Sebastian Menrique (1636), Bernier (1667), and Thomas Bowery (1669-79) have written about Lord Jagannath.

### Ratha Yatra

The world famous Car-Festival of Lord Jagannath held on 'Ashadha Sukla Dwitiya' i.e the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the bright fortnight of Ashadha (June-July) every year. This festival is popularly known as Ratha Yatra, Gundicha Yatra and also Ghosha Yatra. On the Car Festival day, the deities are carried to the Chariots in a traditional ceremonial manner first Sudarshana, then followed by Balabhadra Subhadra and Jagannath are made to swing forward and backward in a manner called 'Pahandi'.

The Chariot of Lord Jagannath is known as Nandighosha. It has 16 (sixteen) wheels and the colour of the fabrics that cover the roof of the Chariot are red and yellow. The Chariot of Lord Balabhadra is known as Taladhwaja. It has 14 (fourteen) wheels and the colour of the fabrics are red and green. Subhadra's chariot 'Devadalan' has 12 (twelve) wheels and fabrics are red and black. Sudarshana is seated by the side of the Subhadra in her Chariot. Madanmohan, a representative deity of Jagannath sits in the chariot of Lord Jagannath. So also two other small idols-Rama and Krishna take their seats in the chariot of Balabhadra. These small idols are made of metal. Thus actually seven deities namely Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra, Sudarshana, Madanmohan, Rama and Krishna are seated on three chariots and moved to a temple known as 'Gundicha Ghar' which is



at a distance of about 3 kms away from Jagannath temple. The chariot of Balabhadra is dragged first, followed by those of Subhadra and Jagannath.

On the first day if any chariot cannot reach the Gundicha Ghar, it is dragged on the next day. On the Return Car Festival day, the deities are brought to the Simhadwar area of the Jagannath Temple. A ritual performed on the 5<sup>th</sup> day (starting from and including the day of Car Festival) is known as 'Hera Panchami' when Goddess Laxmi proceeds to Gundicha. In the evening of the 10<sup>th</sup> day (i.e. the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the bright fortnight of Asadha) the deities are adorned with gold ornaments and dressed gorgeously in their respective chariots parked in the Simhadwar area. On the same day another ritual called 'Hari Sayan Ekadasi' is performed. On the following day i.e. the 12<sup>th</sup> day of the bright fortnight, another important ceremony known as 'Adharapana Bhog' is performed. A sweet drink is offered to the deities. On the evening of the following day, the deities are taken to the temple in a traditional procession amidst gathering of thousands of devotees.

The most distinctive feature of Ratha Yatra of Puri is the close and peculiar religious linkage of the Gajapati king of Odisha with Lord Jagannath. Sweeping of the Cars by the king before the multitude of devotees standing below is the height of religious humility in comparable and unconceivable. Besides, such a grand function suggests equality of human beings before the God who carries the entire humanity with Him in a festival.

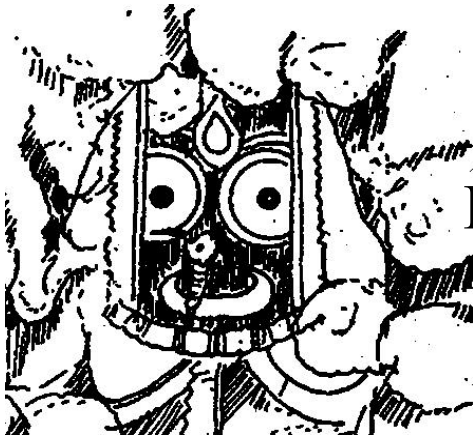
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## The Importance of Mukti Mandapa in Jagannath Culture

*Prabhat Kumar Nanda*

During ancient period famous kings of different countries of the world were depending on the advices of scholars in different fields of life at the time of requirement in state administration. Accordingly famous temples of India have specific committees of scholars to disseminate opinion on temple administration and during crisis of religious thoughts. Such body of scholars is named as Mukti Mandapa Sabha in Jagannath temple.

It is revealed from the history of Jagannath temple that at the time of consecration of the temple, priests of different clans (popularly known as Gotra) were invited from different parts of India to participate in Yagna i.e. specific religious \rite before commissioning of the temple. Brahmin scholars from different, parts of India participated and organized the Yagna. After commissioning of the temple King Indradhyumna requested Brahmin scholars to stay at Puri for organizing day to day rites of the temple. Some of them agreed to it and the King made the arrangements of their stay and livelihood at the cost of the Kingdom. Brahmins having deep knowledge in Veda, Vedanta and other religious scripts were considered for the members of Mukti Mandapa Sabha.

Literally the meaning of Mukti Mandapa Sabhaa is a committee of scholars, who paves the way of religious counseling to attain salvation

i.e Moksha and the freedom from eternal problems in human life. Mandapa is a platform and Sabha means a committee or a board of persons. The committee or board which solves different problems in the individual and social spheres and makes one free from anxiety and to have the way for liberation from eternal sorrows is named as Mukti Mandapa Sabha. Mukti Mandapa is present in front of Adi Nrusingha temple and by the Southern side of main temple. The platform made of black granite stones is of five feet high. The area of the platform is nine hundred sqft and is in square shape. The platform is open having roof and supported by twelve pillars in the circumference with further four pillars in middle portion. The height of each pillar is eight feet and the roof of platform is at a height of thirteen feet from the ground level of the temple. Idols of different Gods and Goddesses of Hindu Religion, made of stone are placed in different parts of the platform. Mostly idols of Lord Nrusingha, Lord Ganesh, Goddess Durga, Lord Brahma, Lord Sreekrishna are prominent at different corners of the platform. A number of artistic works on pillars are also seen in the platform. There is the image of Goddess Kalee at the western part of the platform. Apart from the statues of Gods and - Goddess, other artistic features on stone are also seen on the outer phase of different pillars.



The year of construction of Mukti Mandapa Sabha is yet debatable. Most of the scholars opine that Mukti Mandapa was constructed at the time of commissioning of the temple. The first temple constructed at Puri was Nrusingha temple. Mukti Mandapa Sabha is existing just in front of Nrusingha Temple. Madala Panji, the chronicle of Jagannath temple reveals about the construction of Mukti Mandapa Sabha during the reign of Shree Rama Chandra Deb. It is described that King Mansingh honoured Shree Rama Chandra Deb in front of the temple of Goddess Bimala and declared him as the king of Odisha. Queen Goudaranee, the wife of King Mansingh constructed the Mukti Mandapa in the temple. If such data of Madala Panji is believed then, the period of construction of Mukti Mandapa can be thought of in sixteenth century.

It is undisputed that-Mukti Mandapa Sabha i.e. the existence of the Brahmin Scholars Committee was present from the period of commissioning of the temple. It may be a fact that queen Goudaranee renovated the old platform and constructed the new platform as seen in the temple today.

The other name of Mukti Mandapa is Brahmasana. God Brahma is considered as the God of creation in the universe. Not only geographical bodies but also all literary and religious scriptures were initiated by Him. In Hindu religion Brahma, Bishnu and Maheswara are considered as Trinity i.e. as the creator, administrator and destroyer of the universe. God Brahma is considered as the most scholastic personality and Goddess Saraswati is associated with Him. It is undisputed that God Brahma is the author-of Vedas i.e. the first religious scripture of the world. Hence scholars who have been permitted to take their seats on Mukti Mandapa are considered as representatives of God Brahma.

Specific Brahmin scholars have been permitted to take their seats on Mukti Mandapa. Govt. of Odisha published a book, as Record of Rites for the better management of the temple. It is mentioned in such book that, elderly Brahmin scholars of specific twenty three Brahmin villages of Puri, are only eligible to take seats on Mukti Mandapa.

All disputes among different groups of priests and other groups of people engaged in temple services are solved by the scholars of Mukti Mandapa Sabha. In most of the cases Gajapati Maharaja, (King of Puri refers critical matters to Mukti Mandapa Sabha for their opinion before final decision by him). Not only Gajapati Maharaja or Sebakas i.e. people engaged in temple for religious rites but also common people seek the advices of Mukti Mandapa Sabha on disputes of religious and social nature.

The yearly religious almanac popularly known as Panji, published by different publishers are submitted to Mukti Mandapa Sabha for their approval to authenticate specific dates of different religious rites. The committee of nine scholars as selected by other scholars of Mukti Mandapa Sabha is considered as the apex committee to take immediate decision during any conflict in the religious field and in the administration of Jagannath temple. During Naba Kalebara i.e. consecration of new idols, all rites pertaining to it are managed by the scholars of Mukti Mandapa Sabha.

Mukti Mandapa, a platform of granite stones supported by sixteen pillars is considered as the most celebrated important place within the temple complex. All the devotees visiting Jagannath temple offer their respect by touching their heads at feet of the idols of the platform and by such avail the blessings of scholars sitting on



it. Sixteen pillars existing in the platform are the representatives of sixteen virtues of Lord Jagannath. Lord Jagannath is named as sixteen virtues i.e. Solakala. Though the platform made of granite stones, looks like a general platform, Hindu devotees consider it as the platform of Moksha or Salvation as the last desire of human being. Devotees feel that, by touching the platform one avails the pardon from all evils of life.

Mukti Mandapa Sabha is the highest scholastic body of the state of Odisha. Priests of Jagannath temple are considered as the followers of Utkaliya Baisnaba theory. Utkaliya Baisnabas believe that, blessings of Lord Jagannath can be achieved through spiritual knowledge. Hence

before taking any-action both in their personal and social life, they evaluate it through the knowledge and experience. They never believe in any theory blindly or initiate action without evaluation. Considering it as the ethical values of Utkaliya Baisnabas, Mukti Mandapa is recognized as apex platform of vast knowledge and experience. Mukti Mandapa Sabha has the highest respect of the people of Odisha, paving the way for acquiring knowledge and to implement it in personal and social life.

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## My God ! Lord Jagannath

*Jupiter Das*

You will be surprised  
to see my God  
Lord Jagannath  
Omnipotent.

You will be surprised  
to see my God  
Who has no legs  
But walk in everyone's heart  
Omnipresent.

You will be surprised  
to see my God  
Who has no Hands  
But giving everybody every thing  
mercifully without hesitation  
Omnifarious.

You will be surprised  
to see my God  
Who has no Ear  
But listening everybody  
every person's prayer  
Omnilistener.

You will be surprised  
to see my God  
Who eats  
Sathie Pauti Bhoga alone  
He is My God  
Lord Jagannath.

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## Origin of Pillar Worship

*Dr. Harihar Kanungo*

This creation has remained a wonder and mystery – which has terrified, amazed and overwhelmed man ever since the very beginning. The foundation of the spiritual awareness of the aborigines in his inquisitive mind which has penetrated this wonder and awe investigated the possible reason of existence, cataclysm and dissolution of various matters of the universe around him.

Although he has realized that a definite ‘Controller or Almighty’ is functional behind existence, ruin and dissolution of all living and non-living, his inquisitive and investigating mind has remained ever awakened and active to explore the real entity of that celestial controller. His inward consciousness has been strongly awakened as a result of his having stood on this foundation of spiritual consciousness and cast a vision into the background of those visible matter and mind around him. His realization of the real entity of that invisible controller might have been a success or a failure. But his inquisitiveness in this regard is ever awakened and active which has formed spiritual awareness and thought.



The presence of spirit in every matter whether living or non-living is the belief that germinated in the mind of Aborigines over the passage of time. This spirit as it's abode in all the matters of the creation starting from the nature

given trees, forests, rivers, seas, the sun, the moon, sky and the like. The spiritual consciousness of the aborigines has its origin from his imagination or fear of the spirit existing in all living and non-living matter or the spirit in his own state. He gradually realized the existence of the

spirit breaking through the mystery of birth and death. This spirit-centered belief first created ‘Spiritual Awareness’ in the Aborigines. The realization and finding of the spirit in all these natural objects may be attributed to the source of spiritual consciousness of the aborigines.

The aborigines had undivided faith in the spirit as each matter, living or non-living was considered to be the abode of the spirit. The existence of trees, hills and mountain, river and



seas, the moon and sun, the rain, the snake, the cows (living and non-living objects) made him realize the existence of the spirit within him. As a result of fear, wonder and emotion, he thought worshipping or adoring the nature given objects. The historical and archaeological exploration proves the 'Worship of Trees' was in vogue in aboriginal tribes and communities. Tree was the support of his livelihood. He used to feed on the roots and fruits of trees which, in addition provided him all safety against rain, torridity, storm, flood, thunder, lightning and the attack of wild animals. For all these the grateful aborigines were inspired for the adoration of trees.

In the subsequent times 'Tree Worship' was also in vogue among the aboriginal Sabar tribe (haunter tribe). The aboriginals living in the forest and hilly areas thought of one deity which was regarded as the original deity. Believing that trees are the abode of this deity or God they started worshipping.

Later on, this practice was also carried forward to the next generation. The Gods they had thought of in the living and non-living were the Gods out of his own fear and wonder. They used to realize the invisible celestial presence of the spirit in the tree as in other living and non-living objects. They even regarded the branches and twigs of the tree as the part of the celestial presence of spirit. As a consequence of it they began tree worship believing in the invisible presence of the spirit in the hollow of the tree. In addition to it they also worshipped the branches and the twigs of the trees as part of this celestial existence. This adoration of trees formed a strong religious background in the evolutionary process. As a result being evolved with pillar or tree worship man has gained then fullness of the thought of the ideal of Lord Jagannath.

### **Tree-Pillar-Wood-Worship:**

The main occupation of the Aborigines was to collect different fruits in addition to hunting animals for food. In search of food they had to make shift from one place to another. Hence they had to set up new colonies from time to time. Primarily they were tree-worshippers. While selecting up camps, their main focus was to find a tree worth worshipping at the place. For this purpose, they used to take the help of the religious priest of their community. The process of selecting the place and the tree was part of their religious belief. They were choosing a tree with prominent marks, and to help them in the selection, they needed the blessing and help of their priest and the adored God.

The 'Tree-Worship' had certain definite tradition and principles to be followed. Over and above the tree adoration, they were also worshipping some attention dragging adorable small stones of unusual size. Such small stones were kept at the end of the village.

There was also the practice of worshipping both the tree and the adorable stones in the hollow of the trees. In the course of time, tree-worship was replaced gradually by pillar-worship as they had to change places from time to time in search of food, and due to non-availability of trees with definite and approved mark. They began to worship a pillar in place of a tree. Wood was collected for the construction of pillars on certain principle as were adopted for the selection of tree supposes to be worshipped. They were setting up the pillars within their settlement or outside with the stones as well.

New pillars were set up when old ones perished. A definite principle was adopted while the pillars were changed or replaced. They



enlivened the new pillar by burying at its root five metals i.e., gold, silver, iron, lead and bronze.

Thus they believed that they were infusing life in the pillar. The act of enlivening the pillar was conducted by some chosen priests very secretly and the entire village then was in a great festive mood. In addition to burying the five metals at the root of the pillar they pierced a gold nail at the centre of the pillar to establish relationship with the heart of the God. It deserves mention here that this principle in the aboriginal culture is also noticed in the Buddhism. According to Prof. Prahlad Pradhan in this regard while setting up Buddhist Icon at Beijing in China, 'Brahma' was being established in hollow of his heart. This suggests the tribal tradition of this type had impact on Buddhism.

These aborigines remained self-centered by showing their love and reverence to the stone or tree, representative symbol of the invisible controller who functions behind the visible nature. The controller behind the nature is far from being casual or beyond logic. They took it for granted that it was permanent and eternal, and dedicated them to a life of action (Karma). An analysis of the history of the different religious beliefs of the world suggest that some have tried to explore a cause behind the invisible controller by breaking through the religious belief of the aborigines and

their eternal limits in the name of the progress of civilization or by being attracted by the 'Apple of Wisdom' as in the Bible.

Whether they have been successful or not, yet remains a question. But one thing is certain that they have tried to impose their religious ideas on those innocent tribals through eloquence of their language in analyzing and presenting some imaginary concept in an attempt of dragging these simple tribal out of their happy domain. Have they really been successful in their attempt ? But in spite of all the allurements and eloquence of the language the tribals have remained firm in their simple belief in worshipping the trees, pillars, wood or the adorable stones. This may be called the pillar worship or adoration of the aborigines.

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## Balaramjew Temple at Erbang : A Study on Art and Architecture

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### Introduction

The temple of Balaramjew is one of the Vaishnava shrines of the Prachi Valley in Odisha. It is located at the village Erbang in the Gop Block of the Puri district.

This temple is situated about 5 km from the river Prachi and 3 km from the river Kadua. The village Erbang is locally well-known as the birth place of Balarama Dash, the celebrated author of the first *Odia Ramayana*. Balarama Das is one of the *Panchasakhas*,

who was also a contemporary of Prataparudra Deva and Sri Chaitanya.<sup>1</sup> The present temple of Balaramjew was possibly built in the late medieval period of Odishan history. This temple is completely a renovated shrine of that locality. It consists of three structures such as *vimana*, *jagamohana* and *natamandapa*. The temple is built in sand stones and bricks. It faces to east. The conservation work of the temple was being



carried on at the time of survey of the temple. The Department of Orissa State Archaeology had undertaken the renovation work of the temple. The local tradition says that the temple was initially dedicated to Lord Dadhivamana. Thereafter, it

had been converted to Lord Balaramjew. The temple study has not been done by the earlier art historians. Hence, a modest attempt has been made in this article to highlight the detailed art and architecture of the temple of Lord Balaramjew.

### Art and Architecture of the Temple

#### A. *Vimana*

The *vimana* of the temple is a *pancharatha<sup>2</sup> pidha deula* and its height is about 28 feet from the surface of the temple complex. It has four vertical parts such as *pista*, *bada*, *gandi* and *mastaka<sup>3</sup>*. The *pista* portion is mostly buried under the earth and its upper part measures 6



inches in height. The *bada* is *panchanga* type i.e. having five component parts such as *pabhaga*, *tala jangha*, *bandhana*, upper *jangha* and *baranda*. The base of the *bada* measures 19 feet on each side. All the component parts of the *bada* are bereft of decorative elements.

The central niches of the three sides of the *bada* are housed with the *parsvadevata* images of goddess Vimala, Mahavir Hanumana and Ganesha. Goddess Vimala is the *parsvadevata* of the northern side. The four armed image of Vimala is carved in standing posture on the plain pedestal. She displays *ankusa* in upper right hand, *varada mudra* in lower right hand, *pasa* in upper left hand and *musala* in lower left hand respectively. The image Vimala is made of black chlorite. The slab of Devi measures 1 foot 3 inches in height and 11 inches in width respectively. Goddess Vimala is possibly the original side deity of the temple. Mahavir Hanumana is the *parsvadevata* of the western side which is a small stone slab containing an image of Mahavir Hanumana. He holds *gada* in left hand and a huge rock in right hand. The image Mahavir is made of sandstone and it measures 6 inches in height. It is not the original side deity of the temple. The local people say that this image has been recently housed within 10 years. Ganesha is the *parsvadevata* of the southern side. The four armed image of Ganesha is carved in

*ardhaparyanka* pose on the double petalled lotus pedestal. He holds broken tusk in lower right hand, a pot of *ladus* in lower left hand and both the upper two hands possess indistinct objects. The image Ganesha is made of granite stone and it measures 6 inches in height. Ganesha is not the original side deity and it has been recently housed in the central niche of the southern side. All the *parsvadevatas* of the *vimana* are housed in the *pidha mundi* niches. The images of goddess Vimala, Ganesha and Mahavir Hanumana are not the usual side deities of the Vaishnava temple. These images are haphazardly housed as the

*parsvadevatas* of the main *deula*. It is a peculiar feature of this temple. Generally, in a Vaishnava temple, the Vaishnavite deities like Vamana, Narasimha and Trivikrama are the usual side deities but here we can find the images of Vimala, Ganesha and Mahavir Hanumana.



The *gandi* of the *vimana* is a pyramidal superstructure and it consists of two *potalas*; the lower and upper *potalas*, which contain 4 and 3 *pidhas* respectively. All the *pidhas* of the *gandi* are decorated with *tankus*. The *gandi* continues the *pancha ratha* plan of the *bada*. The *raha paga* of the eastern side is decorated with truncated *pidha mastaka* design, which is surmounted by *ajhapa simha*. Garuda figures are inserted in the four cardinal directions of the *beki* above *rahas*. *Dopichha* lions are finely fixed on the top of *kanika pagas* of the *gandi*. These two elements are supporting to the *ghanta* of the *mastaka*.



The *mastaka* of the *vimana* consists of *beki*, *ghanta*, above which there is another *beki*, *amalaka sila*, *khapuri*, *kalasa*, *ayudha (chakra)* and *dhvaja*. The entire *vimana* is recently plastered with modern cement.

The sanctum of the *vimana* preserves the *Daru* images of Lord Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarsana *chakra* as the presiding deities of the temple. Besides these deities, brass images of Dola-Govinda, Anthua-Gopala, Gaja-Lakshmi, Sarasvati, Narayana and *salagrama silas* are also found worshipped in the sanctum. During the time of survey, for the time being, all the deities of the sanctum had been kept inside the shed of the temple complex. At the time of survey, the renovation work of the temple was carried on by the Orissa State Archaeology Department. These presiding deities are installed on the *simhasana* of 3 feet high. Inner walls of the sanctum are completely plain.

The sanctum has one doorway towards the *jagamohana*. The doorway of the sanctum was also being repaired at the time of survey. Jaya and Vijaya figures of either side of the doorway were being made by the mason when the survey of the temple was conducted by the author. The doorway of the sanctum is mostly plain except the Jaya and Vijaya figures of the recent work.

### B. Jagamohana

The *jagamohana* of the temple is a *pidha deula* and its height is about 17 feet from the surface of the temple complex. It has three parts viz, *bada*, *gandi* and *mastaka*. The *bada* of the *jagamohana* is *panchanga* type i.e. having five component parts like the *bada* of the *vimana*. All the components of the *bada* are devoid of decorative elements. The balustrated window is fixed on the southern side *bada* of the *jagamohana*. The *gandi* of the *jagamohana* is a pyramidal superstructure and it consists of four

flat shaped *pidhas*. Each *pidha* is decorated with *tankus* in all sides. The middle *pidha* of the *gandi* is projected out by the *gaja-simha* motif. The upper *pidha* of the *gandi* is surmounted by *kalasa* in which *ayudha (chakra)* is inserted. Lion figures are found decorated on the northern and southern sides of the *kalasa* respectively.

Garuda, the conventional mount of Lord Vishnu is installed on the circular pillar of 4 feet high and it is made of black chlorite. The Garuda pillar is noticed at the centre of the *jagamohana*. Inner walls of the *jagamohana* are plastered with modern cement without any decorative elements.

The *jagamohana* has two doorways; one on the eastern side and another on the northern side respectively. Both the doorways are completely plain.

### C. Natamandapa

The *natamandapa* of the temple is an open rectangular hall. It has been recently built by the villagers. The roof of the *natamandapa* is supported by 7 square sized pillars.

There is a *Tulasi Chaunra* noticed at the eastern side of the *natamandapa* in the temple premises.

### Boundary Wall

The temple complex is enclosed by a boundary wall, which is made of burnt bricks. The boundary wall is about 6 feet in height. The temple complex has four gates; one on each cardinal direction.

### Main Entrance Porch

The eastern side gateway is being used as the main entrance into the temple complex. The entrance porch of the eastern side is occupied by a half cylindrical roof structure. The upper part of the gateway is decorated with *torana* figures flanked by Ganga and Yamuna figures holding



baby and *kalasa*. The seated peacock is depicted at its apex and it is also flanked by peacocks. The arch is supported by circular pillars on both sides. The backside of the arch is decorated with another arch, which is depicted with leaning *torana* figures and Kamadhenus. The second (backside) arch is crowned by the *kalasa* flanked by inverted parrots. Lion figures are installed on both sides of the main gate. They are acting as the guards of the eastern side gateway.

There are some broken *jhapasimhas* and elephants noticed in front of the main gateway. These broken sculptures belong to the original temple of the site.

### Date of the Temple

There is no authentic evidence with regard to the exact date of the construction period of the Balaramjew temple of Erbung. The local tradition

says that the temple was initially dedicated to Lord Dadhi-vamana towards the later part of the Ganga period. In the Gajapati period, the temple was converted to Lord Balaramajew. The tradition also traces that Balarama Dash was a staunch devotee of Lord Dadhi-Vamana and he used to worship Him with utmost devotion. After the death of Balarama Dash, the earlier Dadhi-Vamana temple came to be known as Balaramjew temple. The earlier Dadhi-Vamana temple was possibly a thatched temple but the present Balaramjew temple was built after the *Panchasakha* of the 16<sup>th</sup> century A.D. The temple has been completely renovated in the twentieth century.

Now the temple is being managed by a local committee of that village.

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## Mahari Tradition of Sri Jagannath Temple

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The worship of Lord Jagannath involved with a number of daily rituals. The rituals of worshipping the Lords are characterized by a royal manner. As a king is meticulously served by his servants daily from morning to night, so also Lord Jagannath is served in the like manner. Hence, there is a dancing ritual in the temple of Lord Jagannath at the time of the Lord's retirement to sleep. There are special Sevakas (servants) employed for this purpose. They are known as "Mahari or Devadasi" and their dance is known as "Mahari Nrutya" or "Devadasi Nrutya".

Such dancing girls of the temples are known by different names in all over India. In Tamilnadu they are known as Devaradiyar, Padiyilar, Taliccherippandugal, Empuremanadiyar, Adukkalaip-pendugal; in Keral they are called Tevidicchis, Nangainar, Kudikkaris, Muraikkaris; in Karnatak as Poti, Jogtis,<sup>1</sup> in southern part of Karnatak they are called as Nayaka Sani, Ranga Sani, Muttukatti Kondavlu, Devarasuli, Nityasumangali, Kasabi,

Patradevalu<sup>2</sup> where as in central Karnatak as Basavi which are grouped as Gudi Basavi, Nadikola Basavi, Balgada Basavi, Ura Basavi, Nadikola Basavi and Chowri Basav.<sup>3</sup> In Andhra

Pradesh the dancing girls are identified with Sani and Bogam.<sup>4</sup> The dancing girls of Assam are named as Kurmapus,<sup>5</sup> Kudipus, Nati or Natin<sup>6</sup>. In Goa they are known as Bhavin. But in Bombay the dancing girls are named according to the presiding deities as Murali, Bhavin, Jagavins, Naikine, Kalavanti, Devali, Matangis and Sharnis.<sup>7</sup> In Odisha the dancing girls of Sri Jagannath Temple are called Mahari and Nachuni.<sup>8</sup>



In Sanskrit lexicon Sabdartha Kalpataru, the Devadasis are mentioned as

Deva paricharika or attendant of the Lords. In Bengali Viswakosa they are known as the Deva Nartaki or dancing girls and Devadasi or servant of the Lords. In Purnnachandra Bhashakosha, the Odia Lexicon, the Devadasis are termed as the



female dancing attendants of the Gods. On the whole, the female dancing attendants who are offered to the Lords are known as “Devadasi”.

In the ancient times the Devadasis were divided into seven categories. They are known as Dutta, Hruta, Bikrita, Bhrutya, Alankara and Gopika or Rudraganika. Such categories reveal the origin and status of the Devadasis.

When a sacred man offered his daughter to a temple as a Devadasi, she is known as “Dutta Devadasi”. But when a lady was kidnapped and subsequently employed in a temple, she is known as “Hruta Devadasi”. Sometimes when a lady was sold to the administrator or the priest of a temple, she is known as “Bikrita Devadasi”. If a lady voluntarily worked in a temple as a Devadasi, she is known as “Bhrutya Devadasi”. Some women who devotionally offered themselves to serve the temple are known as “Bhakta Devadasi.” When a woman after-attaining a certain degree of competence, is offered to the temple with ornaments, she is known as “Alankara Devadasi”. The Devadasis who were getting remunerations for offering dance and music in the temple in a particular time is identified as “Gopika” or “Rudraganika”. These classes of the Devadasis were receiving fixed remunerations and some landed property for their personal use.

The origin of the Devadasi system should be properly investigated. In the Kashikavrutti of Panini, the prostitutes are taken as dancing girls.<sup>9</sup> But it is still doubtful about their dancing performance in the temple premises. At the time of the eminent classical writer of Sanskrit literature Kalidas (4th century A.D.) there were some distinct evidences that the prostitutes were dancing in the temples. In the Meghaduta of Kalidas, it is mentioned that the prostitutes were dancing in a Saivite temple known as Mahakala Temple. Not only that they were dancing exclusively in the

Saivite temples but also the prostitutes were dancing in a Sun Temple as mentioned by Gaidhani quoting the description in the Vikramorvasiyam of Kalidas.<sup>10</sup> Some information about the dancing girls were found in Mruchhakatika of Sudraka, Kuttinimata of Damodara Bhatta, Samayamatruka and Srungarmanjari of Kshemendra, Ramacharita of Sandhyakara Nandi, in Saduktikarmamruta. From these, it is evident that during the time of Kalidas, there was a tradition of dancing ritual before the Gods.

We can also find the description of dancing rituals in the inscriptions of different parts of India. In the stone inscriptions of Bhujabeswar Temple<sup>11</sup> (975A.D.), Kalipadaswami Temple<sup>12</sup> (1018A.D.), Brahmeswar Temple<sup>13</sup> (1053 A.D.), Megheswar Temple<sup>14</sup> (1070 A.D.), Sovaneswar Temple<sup>15</sup> (1080 A.D.), Narendraswar Temple<sup>16</sup> (1083 A.D.), Mukhalingam Temple<sup>17</sup> (11th century A.D.), Jaladhiswar Temple<sup>18</sup> (1144A.D.), Agastiswar Temple<sup>19</sup> (1158A.D.), Laxmi Nrusingha Temple<sup>20</sup> of Simanchalam (15th century A.D.), and Sri Jagannath Temple<sup>21</sup> (16th century A.D.), we find the evidence of dancing rituals.

In the Gita Govinda stone inscription at the Jaya- Vijay gate of Sri Jagannath Temple, it is found that Gajapati Prataprudradev of Surya dyanasty had reintroduced the dancing ritual before Lord Jagannath.<sup>22</sup>

From the preceding discussions it is evident that the dancing rituals are prevalent in the temples since the 4th century A.D. In the 16th Century A.D. inscription of Gajapati Prataprudradev, it has been mentioned that the dancing rituals were introduced in the Jagannath Temple during the reign of Gajapati Kapilendradev (1435-1466 A.D). These dancers were from the local as well as from Telenga community.<sup>23</sup> From this we can assure that the Devadasi tradition



began from the period of Kapilendradev in Orissa which was influenced by the South Indian Culture latter. H.K.Mahatab also accepted that Kapilendradev in 1450 A.D. has introduced the dance rituals of the Devadasis from 'Dhupa' to 'Badasinghar' (morning puja to sleeping at night) in the Jagannath Temple.<sup>24</sup>

In a stone inscription of South India, it can be found that during the reign of Jatavarman alias Virapandya, a dancing girl named Virasekhar Nangai received grant of land for enacting dance on festive occasions.<sup>25</sup> Vachaspati Mishra also refers to the dancing girls who gave performance on the stage.<sup>26</sup> On the Northern wall of Korangunathan Temple of Trichinapoly district of Southern India there is an inscription which mentions the provision made for the playing music during the Srivali service by seven persons during the time of Rajaraja-I.<sup>27</sup> Besides these, on the south wall of Pipilikesvara Temple of Trichinapoly Taluk it is inscribed that the land was endowed to the temple by the purchaser for the maintenance of four artists for singing the Tirupaddiyam.<sup>28</sup>

On the north wall of the Sunderesvara Temple of Trichinapoly district it is also mentioned that two persons were singing the Triuppadiyam hymns during three services (every day) in the temple of Paramesvara.<sup>29</sup>

From the above evidences we can assume that the introduction of Devadasi tradition in the temple of Lord Jagannath was influenced by the South Indian Culture during the reign of Gajapati Kapilendradev.

There is an interesting legend regarding the recitation of Gita Govinda in the Jagannath Temple. Once upon a time it was believed that the-Lord-was fascinated by the Gita Govinda recitation of a girl and followed her. In the process garments of Lord Jagannath were torn by this wild adventure. Next day the Sevakas discovered the

torn clothes of the Lord and informed the matter to the Gajapati. Then the God explained the incident in a dream to Gajapati. As a result the concerned girl was employed as a Devadasi in the temple of Lord Jagannath.

According to tradition, the famous Odia poet Jayadeva had accepted Padmabati, the dancing girl of Lord Jagannath as his wife.<sup>30</sup> The eminent scholar of Odisha Late Kedarnath Mohapatra on the basis of some verses of Gita Govinda has proved that Jayadeva was inspired by Padmabati, the devotional dancing girl of Lord Jagannath<sup>31</sup> for composing the monumental work Gita Govinda.

The 17th century Assamese Poet, Rama Saraswati also describes these things in his long poem entitled 'Jayadev'.<sup>32</sup> The biography of Jayadev by Maitheli Chandra Dutta, it is also mentioned regarding Padmabati the Devadasi and Lord Jagannath.

The dancing ritual is a part of the services (sevas) of Lord Jagannath since the time of Jayadev 12th century A.D. The persons employed in these services (seva) are known as Devadasi, Mahari, Gitagovinda etc. According to their respective duties they can broadly be divided into three classes such as Angila or Anangia, Gahana Mahari, and Bhitara Gayeni. The Anangia girls were the attendants of the Gajapatis. They were considered as superior to the other attendants in the palace.<sup>33</sup> The Gahana Mahari class of dancing girls is at present partially meant for Lord Jagannath. At different occasions they are with Goddess Laxmi. The third category of dancing girls is called Bhitara Gayani who exclusively dedicated to Lord Jagannath. They are permitted to go up to the Kalahat door of Lord Jagannath.

The surname of these dancing girls is Devadasi. Some scholars term them as Mahari.



These girls resided at Anga Alasa Patina.<sup>34</sup> However, we do not find any such place in Puri Town now. In the Record of Rites the residence of these girls are recorded as in Baseli Sahi, Markandesvar Sahi, Kundheibenta Sahi, Bali Sahi, and Matimandop Sahi of Puri Town.<sup>35</sup>

At the time of dancing they put on typical Odishan garments and ornaments. They also put vermilion and collyrium as a mark of married woman.

In their respective turn days of duty they used to go temple with all types of sanctity and purity. The Devadasis were serving at many points in the temple of Lord Jagannath. They used to perform the 'Alasa' dance at the time of Sakaladhupa (morning puja). Col. Phipps observed that "this meal lasts about an hour during which period the dancing girls attached to the temple dance in the room with many Pillars."<sup>36</sup> This many pillar room is identified with Jagamohan or Natamandir. At the time of Lord's retiring to bed after the 'Badasinghar Besa' they stood near the 'Kalahat door' and were reciting the Gita Govinda. In this time the Devadasis were singing songs devotionally in a dancing posture.

Besides the daily routine service, they also served during some special festive occasions like Chandan Jatra, Snan Jatra, Jhulan Jatra, Rukmini Haran Ekadashi etc in the temple. At present, out of so many duties only a few of them survive. The rituals observed in the temple of Lord Jagannath had been stopped after the death of Kokilaprabha Devadasi since 1993. Sashikala the last Devadasi of Srimandir only participated as Jashoda on the occasion of Nanda Utsab, on Bhadrab Krushna Nabami.

For these services the Devadasis were granted 18 Bati (Nearly 80 Acs) of landed property near the village Usunabarapada and were also given Rs.9/- annually. They had also the right

to receive the sacred fire (Vaishnabagni) from the temple of Lord Jagannath. Once they attained the skill of singing and dancing they were presented 'Sarees' as a token of appointment.

Lastly, from Madalapanji official records as well as from other inscriptional sources it can be proved that the dancing girls of Sri Jagannath Temple are known as Mahari or Nachuni. They are different from the Devadasis of the South Indian culture. This Mahari tradition was introduced in the temple of Lord Jagannath by Kapilendradev, the king of Surya dynasty. He had a noble ambition of providing an opportunity as well as right to women to serve for the Lord. For this noble purpose, the Maharis of Sri Jagannath temple were maintained a holy and pious life. But in some other temples of the country due to the illegal, irreligious attitudes of some priests, nobles and powerful persons, this sacred tradition became extremely polluted. When the degeneration of the sacred tradition as well as the holy conduct and character of Devadasis were exploited, the reformists tried to abolish this ancient tradition, for which now-a-days this tradition is going to be abolished from the temples.

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## Sri Jagannath Dham and Pilgrim Tax

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Jagannath Dham is one among the four sacred *Dhams* regarded as very pious by the Hindu pilgrims. The *Four Dham Yatra* is also accepted as a stepping stone to attain salvation. Jagannath or the 'Lord of the Universe' is one of the most famous deities of the Hindus. The ancient temple of Lord Jagannath at Puri from the day of its inception has been an institution for millions of Hindu devotees. They also accepted it as the symbol of tradition and culture. The affairs of Shri Jagannath Temple at Puri were looked after with great devotion by successive Hindu rulers of Odisha. The sacred temple of Sri Jagannath stands on the hillock 'Blue Mount' in the heart of Puri town. Puri or Purusottam Puri is also known as *Shrikshetra*, *Shridham*, *Purusottam Kshetra*, *Shanka Kshetra*, *Nilachal Dham* and *Jagannath Dham* etc. The present temple of Lord Jagannath was constructed by the famous Ganga ruler Chodaganga Dev (1078 AD-1147AD). The Gangavamsi and Suryavamsi rulers made all arrangements for the performance of the rituals of the deities. Pilgrims in large number from all over India visit this temple in all seasons round the year.

Political power of Odisha first declined from the time of Gajapati Pratardra Dev and with the death of Mukunda Deva in 1568 A.D. the governance passed into the hands of the Muslims.



Most of the Muslim rulers collected a pilgrimage tax at Hindu religious festivals in order to avoid the orthodox injunction of Muslim law that public celebration of non-Muslim religious festivals be prohibited. The pilgrim tax, itself has dubious historical and even legendary origins. During the Sultanate period pilgrim tax was an additional tax imposed on non-Muslims. The famous Mughal ruler Akbar abolished the pilgrim tax in 1563 to assist his goal of toleration of all religions and for this act he received the image of a secular ruler in the medieval period. This tax was again revived



by Shah Jahan and it was vigorously implemented by Aurangzeb.

When Odisha was under the Maratha rule Jagannath temple was a source of income for them. They were defraying the expenses of the temple from the pilgrims by imposition of tax. (Pilgrim tax). At that time the pilgrims were to enter in to Puri town through “Lokanath Ghata” or the *Atharanala Ghata*. Pilgrim tax was collected at both the *Ghatas*. Pilgrim tax was also collected at Balasore and Khunta on behalf of the Maratha Government. The pilgrims also had to pay taxes while passing through different zamindaries. The amount of the pilgrim tax was not equal at these places. The rate of tax at *Atharanala Ghata* was Rs.10/- for northern pilgrims and Rs.6/- for southern pilgrims. Apart from this 15 *annas* per head was also collected as entry fee to the temple. But this entry fee was not applicable to the *Sanyasis* and *Kangalas* (poor). Moreover pilgrim tax was also not collected from the people who brought sacred Ganga water for the Lord, the people of the holy soil and the businessmen. The Maratha Government appointed Tahasildars to collect the tax. The rate of tax was fixed by the Government. In this way Jagannath temple was a source of income for the Maratha Government.

Odisha came under the British rule from October 1803 and they took the temple management to their own hand. They imposed the pilgrim tax on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1806 A.D. The British Governor also followed the system of exemption of pilgrim tax. In this connection the Governor General passed a regulation. (The Regulation No. IV of 1806). As per the regulation a Government officer was entrusted with the duty of the collection of such tax. The Board of Revenue was responsible to control the activities of the tax collecting officer. The rate of tax at

*Atharanala Ghata* was Rs.10/- and *Loknath Ghata* was Rs.6/- per person for the rich people and the rest of the pilgrims were charged with Rs.2/- per head.

The tax collection centre at Atharanala normally was overcrowded. The pilgrims were facing lots of difficulties to pay the tax. Taking this situation Government took measures to collect the tax at Calcutta, Dacca, Bihar, Benaras etc. George Webbs after taking the responsibility of tax collection submitted a report to the Government on the modalities of pilgrim tax collection. As per his suggestion *Lal Jattris* should be allowed to the temple for 16 days and anybody who pay Rs.10/- may be given the status of *Lal Jattris*. The second class *Jattris* to be called *Nimlal* and they have to pay Rs.5/- and should be allowed to the temple for a week. The *Bhurranga* class *jattris* should be allowed to the temple for 4 days and they have to pay only Rs.2/-. Above all the pilgrims in actual state of poverty only to be allowed for one day without any payment known as *Kangalas*.

The British Company Government brought some modifications in the system of pilgrim tax by the Regulation No. IV of 1809 A.D.. By the regulation the pilgrims were divided into different categories as per their financial capability. The pilgrims from North India were required to pay Rs.10/- while the pilgrims from South India were required to pay Rs.6/- if they belonged to first category. The pilgrims of second category required to pay Rs.5/- if they came from North and Rs.3/- in case they were from South. The third category of pilgrims were to pay Rs.2/- only. The fourth category of pilgrims were never allowed to enter inside the temple. They have to perform their ceremonies outside the compounds and have to pay Rs.2/- . This regulation also made provision for exemption of pilgrim tax for the



religious mendicants, the people who brought holy water of *Ganges* for the Lord, the persons born within the holy land, persons who resided more than two decades in that land and the people who came for trade.

In 1813, Richardson a member of Board of Revenue proposed the Government to abolish pilgrim tax. It was a reflection of tragic death of 36 pilgrims at *Atharnala* pass gate at the time of pilgrim tax collection.

The Government was not ready to accept the proposal of Richardson, rather it thought of some steps for easy collection of pilgrim tax to avoid such tragic incidents in future. Lord W.C. Bentick, the then Governor General took a move on the abolition of pilgrim tax in 1829 A.D. In 1837 the then Governor General Mr. Auckland sent a letter to the president of Board of Control regarding abolition of pilgrim tax. At last after prolonged discussions and suggestions the pilgrim tax was abolished vide Act No-X of 1840 dt. 20 April, 1840 A.D. Finally this abolition of Pilgrim Tax came into force from on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1840 A.D. The abolition of pilgrim tax however did not sever

the British connection with the management of Jagannath temple. The British Government contributed a fixed amount to the *Raja* of Khurda for the smooth management of the temple affairs. This practice continued till the independence of the country.

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## Unity in Diversity: The Uniqueness of Jagannath Culture of Odisha

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The fame and popularity of “the Lord of the Universe: Jagannath” is noticed both among the foreigners and the Hindu world. Despite many cultural invasions by outsiders and cross cultural barriers by few insiders, Odisha is still maintaining its ‘unique culture’ i.e. ‘Jagannath culture’ of “Unity in Diversity”. Since time immemorial the very name “Cultural Unity” is maintained by its ‘wide range of varieties’. Odisha’s Jagannath culture maintains its unity through its Cultural distinctiveness. Odisha is a beautiful land of many religions, many traditions, many castes and linguistic groups, so also multiplicity is found in Odia culture. Odisha’s Jagannath Culture binds every devotee under “one platform”, that is well known as “Jagannath Dhama” or it is also



known as “Jagannath Puri” which is very popular worldwide. Jagannath culture is so rich, pure and powerful that attracts many outsiders to visit Jagannath Puri time and again, especially during the world famous car festival. Sometimes, diversity may create threat in terms of cultural differentiation

among different groups. But the fundamental principle of Jagannath Culture is based on “Unity in Diversity” to respect all human beings irrespective of their caste, colour, religion, ethnicity. This ‘Cultural uniqueness’ reduces fundamentalism, communalism and encourages all pilgrims to visit ‘Jagannath Dham’ and watch car festival again and again. ‘Car Festival’ of Jagannath Culture is a bright and beautiful example of cultural inclusion and reduction of exclusion. This article

tries to highlight the importance of Jagannath Culture through its uniqueness of “Unity in Diversity”. It tries to encourage the true spirit of ‘Cultural Uniqueness’ through social inclusion of all devotees to visit ‘Jagannath Dhama’ or ‘Srikshetra’ — a pure and holy land of

Odisha region.

The human society in Odisha is based on some form of order of organization on the basis of Jagannath Culture. To recognize the ‘Jagannath Culture’ in true sense, one needs to understand



and identify the in-depthness of its 'cultural uniqueness'. The very essence of Jagannath culture implies an arrangement of parts into an integrated whole, unlike human body consists of different organs or parts, they are different in forms but integrated by a single soul, such a harmonious functioning of the unique culture is referred as Jagannath culture. Let us understand the different parts of Jagannath culture, then only, it will help us to understand the importance of integrated whole.

Odisha's traditional culture is a combination of varieties; so diversity is found in Jagannath culture. Diversity means difference. It means collective differences, such differences mark off one group of people from other. These differences may be biological, religious, linguistic etc. On the basis of religious differences we have religious diversity. Racial diversity is analysed on the basis of biological differences such as black and white, (Aryan and Dravidian). When a group of people share similar characteristics such as language, religion etc, more uniformity is found in such case, whereas, group of people who come from different races, religion and language etc, they represent diversity.

However, it is a fact that Odisha's Jagannath culture is based on its tradition, religion, language, folkways, etc. So diversification is observed in Jagannath culture. Jagannath culture starts from 'Jagannath Dham, Puri' (eastern Odisha) continues to West, North and Southern parts of Odisha like Aska and Gajapati. It spreads in diversified geographical areas of Odisha. Within the territory different castes, tribes, linguistic groups are residing together, so sometimes conflict may take place in the name of religion, castes, colours, which is a biggest challenge against cultural unity. There are several diversifying factors among which communality, casteism,

linguism and regionalism are notable. Communality in the society refers to feelings of rivalries based on religious differences. But 'Jagannath culture' stands much above all these narrowness. Though, in Hindu culture variety of sub-cultural and sub-linguistic groups are found but they all believe in one God, Lord Jagannath, one culture that is Jagannath culture which teaches us to love, care and respect all human beings.

The modern Odisha comprises the ancient States of Odra (part of Khurda district, Nayagarh, Dhenkanal, part of Angul), Utkal (present Balasore, part of Mayurbhanj, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Puri, part of Khurda and Nayagarh), Kalinga (present Ganjam, part of Boudh, part of Gajapati, part of Khurda), Kangoda (tracts in between Rusikulya and Mahanadi rivers and between Salima river (the modern day Salia river which flow in Banapur Tahasil area), Dakshina Kosala (comprising Sambalpur, Jharsuguda, Deogarh, part of Nuapada districts) and Trikalinga (comprising Kalahandi, part of Phulbani, part of Boudh, part of Nuapada, undivided Koraput and part of Ganjam). The modern day Odia script is an evolution of Odramagadhi which was prevalent in the above tracts of area more concentrated in Dakshina Kosala, Trikalinga, Odra and part of Utkal, Kalinga and Kangoda. Though there are varieties in terms of geographical boundaries within Odisha, but its evolution is associated with all these geographical territories. The Jagannath culture is a part and parcel of life of the people in these geographical boundaries. There are different Jagannath temples found in the said areas, different people performed their rites and rituals as per their local traditions. In this way geographical diversification is found in the Jagannath Culture. Unlike geographical diversification, cultural diversification is found in the Jagannath Culture. Shrikshetra of Puri



Jagannath, as is commonly known, can verily be said to be a truthful replica of Indian culture. The impact of culture of Lord Jagannath in Odia literature has been such that it has moulded into a composite literature revolving round the culture of Lord Jagannath. The Odia script and Odia literature are nothing, but manifestation of various aspects of Lord Jagannath in the eyes of the poets and literary Pundits. To understand this culture, one has to have some idea of the history of this land, which again is different from that of other countries of the world. Starting from Lord Jagannath Himself, history has it that he was a tribal deity, adorned by the Sabar people, as a symbol of Narayan. Another legend claims him to be Nilamadhava, an image of Narayana made of blue stone and worshipped by the aboriginals. He was brought to Nilagiri (blue mountain) or Nilachala and installed there as Shri Jagannath in company with Balabhadra and Subhadra. The images made of wood are also claimed to have their distant linkage with the aboriginal system of worshipping wooden poles. To cap it all the Daitapatis, who have a fair share of responsibilities to perform rituals of the Temple, are claimed to be descendants of the aboriginals or hill tribes of Odisha. So we may safely claim that the beginning of the cultural history of 'Shrikshetra' is found in the fusion of Hindu and Tribal Cultures. So diversification is found in the origin of Jagannath culture. In this way caste, culture and traditional diversification are absorbed in the Jagannath Culture. This has been accepted as a facet of our proud heritage. The three deities came to be known as the symbols of Samyak Darshan, Samyak Jnana and Samyak Charita usually regarded as Triratha (of the Jain cult), an assimilation of which leads to Moksha (salvation) or the ultimate bliss.

Historical Diversity in Jagannath Culture:  
In the remote past, Odisha was inhabited by the

aboriginal tribes, who had a civilization and culture quite distinct from that of the Vedic Aryans. The Aryans migrated to Odisha at a later stage and the Vedic religion and culture along with the Upanisadic philosophy and Smarta rituals then began to spread in this country. Buddhism had better times during the rule of the Mauryan emperor Asoka, who conquered Kalinga (the coastal region of Odisha as known by that time) after a dreadful war in the third century B.C. It is said that after the conquest of Kalinga, Asoka abandoned violence, embraced Buddhism and left no stone unturned to propagate it throughout India including the newly conquered Kalinga. It continued to be popular in Odisha for several centuries before Sankaracharya visited Puri in the ninth century A.D. Jainism was perhaps at the height of its glory when Kharavela espoused its cause and took all steps to propagate it in the second century B.C. It is, therefore, historically reasonable to hold that the cult and culture of Jagannatha found its origin in the primitive system of worship of the non-Aryan tribals who had established a shrine for Jagannatha here, in this part of the country in a very ancient time, with all their religious fervour. Then the Aryans had taken it over to worship Jagannatha in Vedic rites and rituals with all religious practices connected with them. Buddhism and Jainism have penetrated in to the innermost apartments of the shrine of Jagannatha with all their religious and spiritual implications. There are different rites; rituals and the day-to-day service (Vidhis) of Lord Jagannatha which owe their origin either to Jainism or to Buddhism, or may be the combination of both, it is difficult to say that, but there are diversities found in those practices. As it is mentioned earlier that the Puranic texts corroborate that Jagannatha was originally a deity of the aboriginal tribes and was known as Nila Madhava, his image being made of some sort of



blue stone. Later, the god manifested himself in the form of four wooden images that we worship now and came to be known by the present-day names in an atmosphere of Vedic re-orientation. Thus, Jagannatha is equally claimed by the aboriginal tribes and the Vedic Hindus to be their original deity of worship. When we think of the Puri temple, we also think of the presiding deities therein as well as the pattern of cultural life that is in vogue around it, which inspire the pilgrims with the lofty ideal of emotional integration in the country. Hence the cult of Jagannatha as we call it now (by way of translating the words Jagannatha Dharma) has to be understood, interpreted and appreciated with all its social, cultural, religious and spiritual implications. Thus, the glory and greatness of Jagannathism may be brought out in the following manner. At a time when Jagannatha gained immense popularity, all important religious cults and creeds known to the people of India in those days were assimilated into the texture of Jagannathism. Such a broad based system of religious life is not to be found anywhere in the world.'

Lord Jagannath is worshipped in different names by different devotees as Vishnu or Narayana or Krishna and Lord Balabhadra as Shesha. Simultaneously, the deities are regarded as the Bhairava (Shiva, the formidable) with Vimala (the Bhairavi or the consort of Shiva) installed in the campus of the temple. So ultimately we find a fusion of Saivism, Shaktism and Vaishnavism of the Hindu religion with Jainism and up to an extent Buddhism in the culture of Jagannath and the cultural tradition so reverently held together in Shrikshetra.

In Odisha different castes, tribes and religious groups are found, they worship their religious leaders/Gurus according to their own tradition. At the same time, different castes and

tribal groups of Odisha celebrate car festivals of Lord Jagannath as per their own regional customs. In this way Jagannath culture is maintained among diversified castes and tribes of Odisha. Odisha is multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic, multi-religious and multi-racial society. Different people worship differently. They have different faiths, different ideologies according to their own religion. In Odisha, the vast population is composed of people having different creeds, customs and colours. In this way Jagannath culture is determined in different shades. It does not fix up with only black or white paint, diversified colours of Jagannath culture make this culture so rich, more attractive and popular worldwide. In this way diversity is found in Jagannath culture.

**Unity in Jagannath Culture:** The very name "Jagannath" is not confined to a single heart, single mind, single person only, this name has a wider connotation, it is beyond our reach, it is popularly known as "Jagatara Natha" means 'leader of whole world', so it can not be confined to one soul. Despite different diversification of Jagannath culture in terms of caste, colour, religion, ethnicity, Odisha's Jagannath culture is world famous because of its unique culture of 'Unity in Diversity'.

Unity means integration where in hitherto diverse people and culture are synthesised into a united whole. Jagannath culture connotes a sense of oneness. It stands for the bond which holds the members of the society together. There is a difference between unity and uniformity, uniformity presupposes similarity, unity does not. Unity in Jagannath culture is born out of uniformity or similarity. It implies a sense of togetherness, encourage wefeeling, it stands for the tie that binds the diverse groups with one another.

As stated earlier, Vidyapati, who is credited with the discovery of Nila Madhava (the



original form or image of Jagannatha) married the daughter of Viswavasud, the chief of the aboriginal tribes. Later on, he was blessed with children through this lady. It is really interesting to note that even to this day, the descendants 'of both Viswavasud and Vidyapati discharge the most important rituals of the temple. They are known as Daita-Pati i.e. descendants of Viswavasud and Vidyapati. Most likely the word Daita is from Daitya or a person of non-Aryan society and Pati is from Vidyapati and they have been combined to connote that, they divided into two sections, are the descendants of both the aboriginal chief and the Brahmin priest. In a society torn under caste discriminations, the so-called high-caste Brahmins do not partake food if touched by the so-called low caste people. But the food offering of the Jagannatha temple which is called Mahaprasada (literally the great grace) is a wonder of the Hindu world. It is the established practice that the moment this Mahaprasada is served, no Hindu of the so called high castes objects to partake it even from the same plate with any person of the so-called low castes. Usually persons of all castes are seen enjoying Mahaprasada sitting in a row.

Though, geographically, Jagannath culture is spreading from one location to another, but starting from East to West, North to South, people of Odisha believe in 'one God', 'Lord Jagannath', who is the supreme of all powers and caretaker of everyone. Be it his food Mahaprashad or be it his place Srikshetra is so pure, holy and spiritual, which binds every devotee under one roof. This sense of 'uniqueness', 'belongingness' binds every heart and soul in one culture which exists beyond boundary. This is more prominent during car festival, people from different corners of the world is gathered in one geographical area of Puri Badadanda or Srikshetra to celebrate the world famous car festival of Lord Jagannath. This is the

true symbol of "unity in diversity" of Jagannath culture.

The Car Festival held in June-July every year is symbolic of many lofty ideals of a highly developed society where equality in treatment and of opportunities are considered to be the fundamental right of every individual. When theosophy and religion are viewed from this point, it becomes imperative that everybody should be treated as equal in the eyes of God. The Car Festival, participated by lakhs of pilgrims from the whole of India and abroad, has a number of vidhis or practices in connection with the pulling of the chariots and the journey of Jagannatha to the garden house. One of the vidhis is called Chherapahanra. This literally means the sweeping of the floor. On this occasion, when the deities are brought from the main temple and placed on the special seats designed for them on the chariots, the Raja of Puri who is recognized as the scion of the earlier sovereign emperors of Odisha and presently holds the most important office of Chairman in the management of the temple, is required to sweep the floor of the chariots in front of the deities with a golden broom-slick. Thousands of eyes watch the performance with rapt attention. Amidst uproarious clapping, the mammoth gathering offers its felicitations to the traditional head of the State as he performs the duties of a sweeper. This vidhi bring home the idea to everybody that the highest political head of the State is not superior to a sweeper in the eyes of God, who is the supreme object of, worship by everybody equally on the earth. Needless to say, this vidhi or practice is symbolic of the highest form of social justice, equality and unity that has remained an objective to be realized by humanity in all walks of life. It is, no doubt maintains unique culture of unity in diversity through rendering services to Lord Jagannath.



Though, the people of Odisha is different from each other on the basis of their caste, colour, religion and linguistic groups but everyone believes on one religious leader who is none other than Lord Jagannath, who protects everyone from all distress. However, each religious book teaches us the same humanity to help poor and needy, to protect the women's dignity, to respect elderly person, above all maintain unity in diversity.

The sacred place of Puri or Purusottam in the East assumed increasing prominence through ages as one of the four famous Dhams, others being Badrinath in the North, Dwaraka in the West and Rameswaram in the South. It was recognized by Adi Shankaracharya as one of the eminent places of pilgrimage in the eighth century A.D. Puri assumed more and more importance as great Vaishnava Acharyas like Sri Ramanuja, Sri Vishnuswami, Sri Nimbark and Sri Madhavacharya visited this place. Subsequently, it was visited by great saints of various religious communities namely Nanak, Kabir, Sri Chaitanya and so on. It was compared with Kashi, Mathura, Vrindavan, Ujjain, Prayag, Gaya, Ayodhya and other sites of pilgrimage. Lord Jagannath is the presiding deity of Puri and a prominent symbol of Hindu Kingdom. The Gajapati King of Puri was recognized as the supreme royal authority, for safeguarding the hoary traditions and long-ranging rituals, year-round festivals with all Pujas, Veshas, Prasads and Mahaprasads. But the king did not claim any supremacy rather he was humble, loyal, devoted and committed to the famous traditions and heritage honoured by all sections of Hindu community. The king however, felt himself as the first servant of Lord Jagannath although he is ever regarded as the moving god (Chalanti Vishnu), the temporal incarnation of god. The glory of Lord Jagannath and supremacy of the king are acknowledged by all because of this uniqueness of Jagannath culture. Lord Jagannath is

symbolizing some aspect of human aspiration, he is also known as Lord Vishnu : The cosmic sustainer of the phenomenal universe and bestower of salvation or moksha. He is the supreme god of all sects. Though, Vaisnava saints advocated for worship of different forms of Vishnu Avatars or incarnations like Nrusimha, Krisna, Rama, Narayana, Gopinatha, Madhava, Ananta Sayana and Vasudeva. While those of Ramananda looked upon him as Ramachandra. Other Vaisnavite sects treat Jagannatha as Krishna. Odishan Vaisnavas consider Jagannatha as the combined body of Radha and Krishna. This would explain that Jagannatha represents an assimilation of all religious cults, creeds and sectarian philosophies that come under the purview of Hinduism in the broadest sense of the term. With such a cultural background of Indian social life, one may like to know, if the world famous temple of Jagannatha has got any message to deliver. There is a saying in Odisha that 'In Puri, there is no caste system. In other temples of India, people of some castes such as the sweepers, the washer men etc. are not allowed into the inner apartments, but in the Puri temple, they are not only allowed to entry, but people of these castes discharge certain specific duties and services for the performance of some traditional rites for Jagannatha. Here unity is maintained through duties in Jagannath culture. It is believed that all these Avatars will be worshipped in one God as "Lord Jagannath", he is unity of 33 crores of Gods and Goddesses, and by worshipping Lord Jagannath one can worship all these Gods and Goddesses at the same time. Here unity in diversity is maintained through traditional beliefs.

Thousands of people, artists, artisans, producers and priests are employed through generations. Specific potteries and paintings are required at a large scale. Pandas and Purohits, Pandits, dancers and musicians are engaged in



various rituals and festivities. Various specific services are rendered by people through hereditary arrangements. Previously hundred of acres were given to these people through endowments. The systems of Pattachitra paintings, the Chamar Seva and of the Devadasis are very specific to the Puri temple. The Chamar Seva is a special service rendered to gods and it is a right enjoyed by some people. Similarly Chitrakaras are required for preparing Pattachitra and painting the idols of gods etc in the temple and cars during festivals. These people mostly live in some lanes in and around the Puri town and the village like Raghurajpur. Similarly various kinds of potteries are prepared by some people who enjoy this right through endowments of land from ancient times. Devadasi system was prevalent for entertaining the Gods. The Odishan art, literature and music are influenced immensely by Sri Jagannath Culture. The traditional Mahari dance Odishi dance, classical songs, are mostly developed under the influence of Lord Jagannath and His favourite lyrics of Geeta Govinda was composed by the immortal poet Jayadev. Many poems and fictions are also written under the influence of Sri Jagannath culture. A lot of folk tales, folk songs, proverbs Chautisas etc. are also influenced by Sri Jagannath culture. Mahaprasad has acquired a special and significant position in the life and religion of Odisha. The cookery of Srimandir is known as the largest cooking system. The sanctity of this holy food is boundless and it is known as a sacred bond between gods and men and among the people. It is interesting to note that Mahaprasad is not only delicious, but also enjoyed by all irrespective of caste, creed and religion. This is also given priority before serving any other food in a feast. It strengthens the bondage between castes and relations. Especially newly formed bondages of marriage are solemnized by Mahaprasad. The Mahaprasad is

prepared daily many times inside the temple very scientifically. Even during the Car Festival, Mahaprasad is cooked in Gundicha Mandir and taken by thousands of people. It is thus found that Sri Jagannath Culture with its uniqueness of 'unity in diversity' has a great impact on the socio-cultural and religious life of Odia people in particular and Hindu community in general. A deep sanctity and significance is attached to the culture of Lord Jagannath not only by Hindus, but also by many people belonging to other religions. Particularly, Srimandir, Sri Jagannath and His allied objects are given great honour and reverence by the people of Odisha. Lord Jagannath is not only the presiding deity, but also His temple is regarded as the nerve centre controlling all aspects and spheres of Odia people. It is a fact that non-Hindus are not admitted into the Puri temple, but the Hindus of all castes including the aboriginal tribes, the Jains, the Sikhs and the Buddhists are all allowed into it. That is the reason why the temple of Jagannatha is so popular worldwide.

The land of Odisha is very peculiar for the simple reason that eventhough many tribal communities form the major part of the population, but they almost have a common spiritual belief as a result of which the worships of Lord Jagannath as we all know now has been a evolving synthesis of many people, but with a common stream of thought flowing from pre-Vedic period as is evident from many Purans and comparative study of old civilization as well as archaeological excavation. The worship of Lord Jagannath in Odisha, as is described in the preceding paragraph, has led to evolution of distinct culture which is usually described as Jagannath culture. Jagannath culture believes in universality but not in sectarianism. Lord Jagannath as we know now is the God of masses, but not of individuals with individual choice and thus naturally Jagannath



culture has been observed as a mass culture. People of diverse faiths with their distinct social backgrounds have worshipped Lord Jagannath as their own. From the footprints of the ageless cultural heritage in India and abroad, we find that tribal (original inhabitant of Odisha), Dravidians, Aryans, orthodox Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, Sikhs, sects of Hinduism i.e. Vaishnavites, Saivites, Ganapatyas, Saurays, Shaktas have reposed their implicit faith in Lord Jagannath according to their beliefs. Culture of Lord Jagannath has been an elastic culture. Apart from influencing other culture it has, in course of time and passage of ups and downs, social, political, financial status of the common people which comprise the modern day Odisha, has incorporated in its fold, the various cultures and their salient aspects of various faiths. Jagannath Mahaprabhu is wooden deity (Saura) without any sense organ. At the same time, he is Dravidian deity with sense organ. He is the Purusottam of the Veda and Darubrahmas of Brahmins. He is the Dakhinkali for the Saktas and Vairaba for the Saivites. He is Mahaganapati for the Ganapatyas and at the same time he is the Suryanarayan for the Sauryas. His festivals are of Puranic origin and rituals are admixture of tribal rituals as well as Sakta's Nyasa and Mudrus and many more. His majority of rituals are based on Uddiyan Tantras which are the refined versions of Mahayan Tantras as well as Shabari Tantras which are evolved from Tantrik Buddhism and tribal belief respectively. Of his Mantras incantation Oum is Vedic and Hlim, Slim, Klim are Tantrik. His Kaibalya (dried Mahaprasad of rice) is of Jaina origin and Nirmalya of Saivite origin. His worship, attire, foods rites and rituals are nothing, but a synthesis of various cultures and beliefs. But, at the same time it is free from all types of regional separatism, scriptural exclusiveness and regional narrowness. By its wonderful power of assimilation it has effected

the synthesis of all cultural communities, States and universe. One of the major salient features of culture of Lord Jagannath is tolerance which is an outstanding human value propagated by culture of Lord Jagannath which postulates with every way of life as its contribution in its specific way to the human welfare. The culture of Lord Jagannath stands for religious tolerance, co-existence of all religions, communal harmony and international integration. This has led to the present day situation in which we see that Lord Jagannath is worshipped by all irrespective of castes, creed, colour and community. As a result, the entire universe and inhabitants of universe are part and parcel of the concept of culture of Lord Jagannath. To understand the influence of culture of Lord Jagannath on people of Odisha, it is necessary to analyze the various aspects of culture of Lord Jagannath which are the seeds for germination in respect of Odia people. The gap between men and divine has been bridged in Jagannath culture because Jagannath is a highly humanized Deity. He brushes his teeth, takes bath, changes his cloth, wears out robes and gold ornaments, studded with diamond, enjoys 56 varieties of food (Mahaprasad) and 36 categories of servitors pay their "Seva Khatani" according to their "Khatani routine", for the daily duties relating to worship of Lord Jagannath.

Jagannath culture does not admit any distinction among the castes and communities. Jagannath culture aims at liberating poor and down-trodden for better life for which He is called Patitapaban and for which he observes Ratha Yatra. Humbleness is a cardinal human value which is amply prevalent in culture of Lord Jagannath. Culture of Lord Jagannath always takes a positive view of the life away from the pessimistic thought of grief, suffering and death. It recommends strong faith in Divine. It teaches



man to strive for perfection of its soul by the sacrifice of his self. Worldly pursuits find no place in culture of Lord Jagannath. Here in concept of Lord Jagannath, the devotees pray for/ask for divine life, but not material gain. Culture of Lord Jagannath has effected unity in diversity by faith, and integrated human society with the help of human values. Darshan and Mahaprasad Sevas of Lord Jagannath are the twin desires of each believer of Lord Jagannath. When we as pilgrims devotees or as visitors go to the Lord Jagannath Temple complex, we usually wait for sometime to partake Mahaprasad preferably in Anand Bazar. Anand Bazar which is situated inside the premises of Lord Jagannath Temple, Puri is a place where Mahaprasad is served in shape cooked rice, dals, curry, sweets and Sukhila Bhog etc. Mahaprasad reduces untouchability, casteism, regionalism, superiority and inferiority complex between individuals; all are treated equally in the eyes of Lord Jagannath.

**Conclusion:** The Jagannath culture is a fusion of Unity and Diversity, in one hand diversity creates differentiation in terms of opinions among masses, whereas Unity provides strength to this unique culture and its tradition. They are the two sides of the same coin; two sides are interdependent with each other in the following ground.

From very early time, Jagannath culture is visualized as one culture of Jagannath Dhama, the whole landmass from Puri to Sambalpur in one region. In this way geographical unity is maintained by Jagannath culture. Although, Jagannath Dhama is a land of many religions, the concept of Jagannath culture is essentially a religious one. Hinduism, being the religion of the majority of the people of Odisha provides a basis for unity. It is a fact that Hinduism in Jagannath culture is not a monolithic religion. There are

number of sects in Hinduism. But they have some common faith with slight variation. The same myth, legends and deities are shared by all the Hindus in spite of their scriptures like the Vedas, Upanishads and the Gitas, epics like the Mahabharat, the Ramayan and the Bhagabat read by every Hindu give rise to the feeling of unity. Jagannath temple exists in four parts of Odisha viz. East, West, North and South. Car festival is also celebrated in all parts of Odisha, this shows the religious unity of Jagannath culture. Jagannath culture is based on cultural integrity. The fundamental approaches to art, philosophy, literature are typically based on Jagannath tradition. These common social functions and cultural traditions foster cultural unity. Last but not least, there is an emotional bond that binds all inhabitants of very beautiful land of Jagannath Puri. The very name “Jagannath Dhama” emotionally brings all devotees under one roof (Jagannath Kshetra). Jagannath culture has had a remarkable tradition of interdependence which has held us together within the same culture. One manifestation of it is found in the form of Jajmani system. It is a system of interdependence of castes. In Jagannath culture people may find some diversification which is determined on the basis of rich traditions, varieties of languages, traditional caste/religious groups, geographical boundaries. While its democratic structure protects its political unity, its ‘cultural unity form’ guarantees the harmonious co-existence of socio-cultural diversities. The world is seldom known a rich traditional culture like Jagannath culture of Odisha with an age old socio-cultural diversity which gives a unique impression of pluralism. Name of the federal concept, old or new, bourgeoisie or socialist are known to encompass such a wide range of distinction within a particular territory. Viewing the unity and its rich cultural heritage intellectuals say that Jagannath culture presents



‘diversity in unity’ while other says Jagannath culture holds ‘unity in diversity’. However, a true devotee always feels proud for this ‘uniqueness’ of Jagannath culture which binds diversified people in a strong cultural unity. So that, we can proudly say ‘Jai Jagannath’ and Odisha's great Jagannath Culture “

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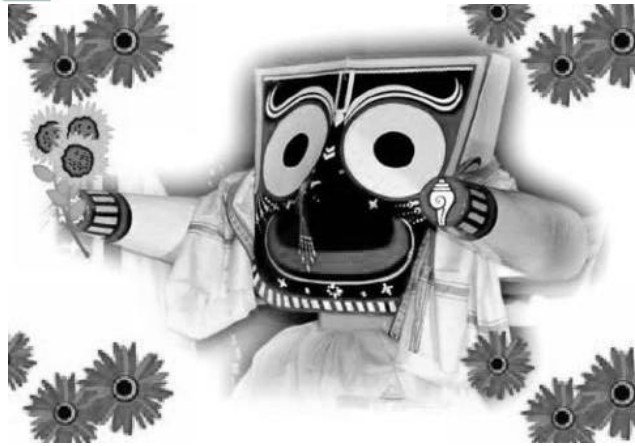
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# Lord Jagannath as Viewed in English Literature - A Study

*Guruprasad Mohapatra*



Sri Jagannath is a mystery and enigma in Himself. It is rather an imprudence to fathom the Unfathomable, to know the Unknowable, to empower the All Powerful. It is a very narrow and un-courteous term to call '**His Consciousness**' as a '**Cult**'. He is certainly far above the cultic Gods and Goddesses. He is still worshipped for His time transcending ideology and estimated as the super synthesis of utilitarian Consciousness, Traditions, Religions, Worships and Dogmas. He is not only the epitome of religious Consciousness of the universe but also the nerve centre of the cultural, literary and social ethos of the Hindus, Jainas, Buddhists, Christians, and so on. He is both Finite and Infinite, Visible and Invisible, Tangible and Intangible.

Sri Jagannath in English literature provides an interesting study to analyse the view points of several travelers, tourists, administrators, scholars, missionaries and Indo-Anglican writers. Most of the travelers have delineated Sri Jagannath in a befitting manner. Yet, some have become cynical. Interestingly, foreigners and scholars from the west have dwelt upon Jagannath in varied ways. Friar Odoric (1321 AD), Nicolo Conte (1430), Sir Thomas Roe (1616), W. Bruton (1633) Bernier (1667), Capt. Hamilton (1727), Major W. Thorn (1803), Robert Southey (1810) and scholars like Stevens, Prof. Wilson, James Fergusson, Gen. Cunningham, W.W. Hunter etc. have lavished

profusely, though obviously not eulogistically always, on the deities, or the car-festival or even the Buddhist origin of Jagannath. The Britishers have oscillating attitudes ranging from awe and admirations to sequential disillusionment, viewing it initially as an amorphous idol. Christian missionaries have tried to supersede the spiritualism of Jagannath, by using a despicable metaphor – Juggernaut. However, in Indo-Anglican writings Sri Jagannath has been the symbol of Henotheism. It is curious to make an account of differences and echoes in observation of so-called intelligentsia.

The holy shrine of Puri and Lord Jagannath, has not only drawn pilgrims from across the country for centuries, but also foreigners who took considerable interest about the place and the Lord. Among the foreigners, two Europeans such as William Bruton and Fray Sebastian Manrique are remarkable. Their description about the deity, ritual practices and places are the earliest available account on the theme. Though a great deal of work about the culture has been found in the accounts of A. Stirling, W.W. Hunter, John Beams, some significant research has been done by a group of German idealists like Hermann Kulke, Anncharlott Eichmann and H. Von Stieterncron. Bulloram Mullic's account of his journey to Puri is a good package of philosophical evaluation of Jagannath consciousness. However



the tremendous proliferation of Jagannath research till today had its origin in the emergence of the “Oriya School” in the early 1970s. It gathered momentum in the late seventies with the publication of Nityananda Patanaik’s ‘Cultural Tradition in Puri’. This development enforced the theory oriented scholars to prove into the culture in full steam. K.C. Panigrahi’s “Seminal historiographical studies on the medieval Oriya literature and traditional accounts and their relevance for the Jagannath cult” is a monumental study. Scholars like K.B. Tripathy, P. Acharya, K.C. Mishra, G.N. Dash, G.C. Tripathy, Sabita Acharya, B. Ray, Subhakanta Behera, Nibedita Mohanty, Bishnu Mohapatra etc. have their remarkable contributions to the study on Jagannath.

In order to understand what Jagannath Consciousness is, it is necessary to learn what He has, for ages, been. The study proposes, therefore, to examine stage by stage that complex growth of enchaining superstitions and of yearnings after truth, which, nourished by the pilgrim bones of centuries and watered by the tears of millions of disciples, now spreads itself out in full grown luxuriance upon the Puri sands. Besides certain perpetual appeal to the popular instinct, Jagannath Consciousness aims at a catholicism, which embraces every form of universal belief. The fetishism and bloody rites of the aboriginal races, the mild-flower worship of the Vedas and every compromise between the two along with lofty spiritualities of the great Indian reformers, have found refuge. The rigid monotheism of Ramanuja in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the monastic system of Ramananda in the 15<sup>th</sup>, the mystic quietism of Chaitanya at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> and luxurious love worship of Vallavacharya towards its close, mingle within the walls of Jagannath at this present day.

Sri Jagannath Consciousness is not only a manifestation and fusion of eclectic essence of

all religious currents but also a reflection of humanitarian appeal, proclamation of universal brotherhood and renunciations, beyond pride and prejudice. Since antiquity Lord Jagannath has been a pollinating agent, sucking nectar from various petals of spiritual spheres and transmitting the grains of universal consciousness. He has been a forum for free exchange of philosophical, secular and intellectual curiosities and consequences of synthetic values.

The Europeans particularly the British attitude to Jagannath offers an interesting study. Viewing it initially as an amorphous idol, they made it into an abusive metaphor – Juggernaut-but soon got boomeranged by it in their evangelical endeavours. Vilifying the immense importance of the car-festival of the Lord and ascribing to the festival a genocidal contour, they wrote from time to time about the pilgrims throwing “themselves under the chariot so that its wheels may go over them..... and the car passes over them and crushes them and cuts them asunder and so they perish on the spot”. Conti even supplements by adding that to be “crushed to death” in such a manner was “a mode of death which they say in very acceptable to their God”. Gasparo Balbi also repeats this preposterous nonsense. In Bruton’s aspersions the same insularity of vision is reflected. Berrier is also cynical in his view. Hamilton, Wood House, Robert-Southey, David Smith, Reverend Ward, W.W. Hunter etc. had also done the same. Some of them even described Jagannath as “a figure that resembled nothing in the heavens above or the earth beneath or in the waters under the earth. This had impelled Maj. Thorn to visit the place and see the amiable object of veneration by millions of pilgrims, though he found the deity disgusting.

Christian missionaries, came to give a sadistic sense of “hellish triumph”. Stirling, the Collector of Puri, wrote in 1818 to say that such so-called “excess of fanaticism” reflected in and



through instance of immolation were too few far between and that invariably these were results of accident or euthanasia. Chevers would endorse such a view. This naturally would give credence to the view about “that ecstatic mockery of martyrdom” as figments of the alien flights of fancy. If that be the case then the barbarity of commercializing the temple and its traditions in the name of seeking insulation from pollutions of superstitions is as preposterous as it is mock rhetoric. Perhaps a pseudo-reformatory zeal for missionary purposes lay at root, which raised a hullabaloo about frivolous accidents but found soon, to its dismay, that the Jagannath-culture is not so fragile as to succumb to such susceptibilities and insinuations.

Lord Jagannath in Indo-Anglican literature can be analysed in two aspects, as the impact of Jagannath consciousness on literary works and literary creations based on Lord Jagannath. The ancient writings have accepted Lord Jagannath as the symbol of henotheism. He is every form in one form. In the writings of Gandhiji, Nehru, Dayananda Saraswati etc. the scarcity of cosmopolitan outlook is discovered in the practice of temple culture. But the description of His glory is so mountainous that the reformist views have lost their vigor.

The synthetic cult and consciousness of Jagannath is an epitome of divergent religious creeds and schools of philosophy that prevailed in India at different periods of her long cultural history. In the historic process of adjustments, Jagannath has assimilated strange contradictions in a manner that is most amazing in the history of religious thought. There is no discarding any in this religion of man”, wrote Pandit Nilakantha Das, “and all the gods and goddesses attacking and appealing have found a place in the compound of the temple. Jagannath has welcomed and embraced all, but been overwhelmed by none and has lost Himself in none”.

The Central theme of the Jagannath cult and consciousness is that the macrocosm manifest in the Triad is the same as the microcosm or the individual self. This cumulative Upanishadic substance deified in the Triad and the transcendental state of gnosis intrinsic to it were beyond the cane of evangelical comprehension.

The obsidian eyes continue to notoriously glitter without a flicker !

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## Social Life of the Sevayats of Puri in the Cult of Lord Jagannath

*Abhimanyu Dash*

Religion without society is not a religion. Society without religion is not a society. Both religion and society exist together in the cult of Jagannath. They are inseparable. The social life of the Sevayats are interlinked in the cult of Jagannath. The society and the cult can't progress in the absence of either of the two. Although the cult of Lord Jagannath has spread widely in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the social life of His own land remains unchanged. To conserve the cult for future, the social life of the Sevayats of Puri is not changed by external influences. Puri, though a small temple town, attracts large number of people from different parts of India, many of whom desire to settle down here as the ultimate place of salvation. Normally the original inhabitants of Puri consisting of priestly class, artisans and others connected with the services to the temple reside mainly in Markandeswar Sahi, Harachandi Sahi, Balisahi, Daitapada Sahi, Dolamandap Sahi etc. The original inhabitants of these localities are Sevayats (priestly class), Supakaras (cooks), Carpenters (Badhei), Painters (Chitrakaras), Potters (Kumbhakaras), Stone Carvers (Pathurias), Applique workers and artisans like *patta* painting and palm-leaf carving. Their way of living, food, cloth, income and expenditure pattern, housing and social functions etc. are more or less influenced by Jagannath culture. This article

contains housing, food, marriage, dowry, position of women, Jagagharas, Naga, Medha and Gotipua dance, Devadasis, Yatras, fairs and festivals, Muktimandap, Swargadwar and some common social features.

### Housing

The people of Puri town particularly the Sevayats are not interested to build spacious houses in distant parts of the town in order to remain close to the Jagannath temple. Consequently the size of the houses of this area are very small. Even some of the houses nearby the temple are three feet in width because of division of paternal family. The people like to stay in these areas in their parental houses. Each of these houses in this area is considerably raised on a masonry plinth of four to eight feet in high. In the front of each house there is a verandah. There is no proper ventilation and light in the houses.

Most of the Pandas having Jatri (Pilgrim) business are the owners of more than one house. They have these extra houses varies from 30 to 50 rooms. These rooms have little facilities of proper light and ventilation of air.

At present some of the Sevayats prefer to construct spacious houses outside the temple



town to remain free from jammed housing in their paternal houses. But they do not forget to serve the temple which is their bread and butter. Their service to the temple of Lord Jagannath is the base of their livelihood.

### Dress

A race is known by its dress. The people of Puri and the Sevayats are identified by the dress they wear. The female population of Puri wears sarees of cotton in ordinary days. But in festivals they wear *pata* (Silken cloth). The males wear *dhoti* and *kurta*. The dresses are simple. The priests and the local indigenous people wear towel. The Sevayats colour the towel in an indigenous process with cheese, oil and milk which is very costly. At present the young Sevayats use to wear pants and shirts after their service to the Lord particularly outside the temple.

### Food

The Mahaprasad is sacred to all pilgrims. Generally, the Mahaprasad is served in all social functions of the local people and also nearby villages. Some of the local people only take Mahaprasad as their daily food. The people pay highest regard to Mahaprasad. There is no bar of caste while taking Mahaprasad. Nirmalya (dried Mahaprasad) which can be kept intact for years is taken by the pilgrims as a token of divine presence of the deity of Jagannath. They take Nirmalya everyday. The Mahaprasad is the most sacred object on which people solemnly swear at the time of marriage between the parents of bride and bridegroom. It is one kind of promise in pre marriage period. The local people believe that before a person breaths his last he is fed with Nirmalya which is believed to take him to heaven.

Pujapanda Sevayats (priests worshipping Jagannath) who worship the Lords in the temple

do not take cooked foods in their houses on the day of their Seva. After the rituals they take Mahaprasad. They do not take any non-vegetarian foods in their house on the day of their seva. But there is no restriction on food for the suar sevayats who cook for the Lords. They are allowed to take food of their choice before going to cook for the Lords. As they take sufficient food before cooking, they will not have any attraction for the foods which they cook for the Lords.

Sevayats take rice, dal and curry etc. in day time but at night most of the sevayat families take Mahaprasad or bread. But they like to consume milk products and milk at night. 'Dalma' is a popular food item among the sevayats prepared with dal and vegetables. In all the functions dalma is a common food item. The people prepare community feast.

In addition to this after consuming food the people generally use pan (betel). Betel consumption is very common in the locality. People of all classes consume betel which contains digestive properties. Betel leaves are supplied to Puri from Chandanpur situated in ten kilometers distance. People of Puri in general and sevayat class in particular consume bhang. Bhang, leaf of a plant having intoxicated properties is popularized by the Sevayats of the Jagannath temple as a sign of luxury. Bhang also contains digestive properties.

### Marriage

There are three categories of Sevayats in the temple. They are Brahmin Sevayats, Daita Sevayats and Sudra Sevayats. Brahmin Sevayats are not allowed to have marital relationship with other category of Sevayats and other non-Sevayat caste. A Brahmin Sevayat is debarred from



performing his *seva* in the temple, if he marries in other Sevayat or non-Sevayat caste. The Brahmin Sevayats keep marital relationship with their Brahmin Sevayats of the Jagannath temple. Even they are not allowed to marry the Sevayats of any other temple. They give first preference to marry their son to his uncle's daughter. This system of marrying uncle's daughter is found not only in Southern part of India, but also in foreign countries like Egypt, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan etc.

In the Brahmin Sevayat family the bridegroom with his friends and relatives visit the bride's house on the day of marriage in a procession. There the marriage is held and the bridegroom returns back to his house without bride. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the marriage again the bridegroom visits bride's house for some rituals and he returns back to his house on the same day without bride. On the 3<sup>d</sup> day of the marriage again the bridegroom visits the bride's house. After some rituals the bridegroom returns on the same day to his own house in a procession. This time the bride also accompanies the bridegroom. But in other castes the bridegroom returns with bride on the marriage day after the marriage rituals are over. Here the impact of the temple on Sevayat is visible as found in Rukmani *vivaha*. The Sevayat bridegroom does not use new clothes on his marriage days. He is not allowed to use stitched clothes. He wears Chheda (clothes) washed by the washer-man. He also does not cover his upper portion of the body with shirt. On the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the marriage the bride and bridegroom both visit the bride's house and after some rituals again backs to bridegroom's house on the same day.

Even the Pujapandas are not keeping marital relationship with other Brahmin Sevayats of the temple. Now the Pujapanda Sevayats have marital relationship with other Brahmin Sevayats

of the temple. But there is no such restriction for Sudra Sevayats and Daita Sevayats. They can have marital relationship with other caste Hindus.

### **Dowry**

Marriage is held within their own temple Brahmin Sevayats. There is no case of dowry torture. These Sevayats know the economic status of each other. Before marriage proposal they know the economic condition of the bride's house. They know what they will get as dowry. And also all the families are related to each other, as they marry within their own society. That is why, there is no such dowry torture in the Sevayat society. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the marriage, the bridegroom's house sends some ornaments to the bride's house for the bride. And on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the marriage before entering bridegroom's house, the bride is presented with a golden ring. From the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the marriage the bride stays in the bridegroom's house. And the bride's house sends cooked food or money to the bridegroom's house minimum for 7 days for the bride. Some rich families send food for their daughter's maintenance for years together. But all the families are bound to send food for 7 days minimum. In lieu of cooked food they can send money or vegetables and grocery to bridegroom's house. The people believe that marriage is decided in the heaven by the God. Marriage is a lifetime contract. Divorce is regarded as sin. Divorce is also regarded as the most obnoxious act. Religion restrains divorce. The women too do not seek divorce. Marriage in Sevayat families generally is not individual's decision but this is a family's concern. The elder members of the family have a great say in the marriage of youngsters.

### **Position of Women in the Society**

A small number of highly educated girls are found among the Sevayats. They do not give



importance to women's education because they give marriage to their girl's among their own limited Sevayat youths. And it would be difficult to find highly educated match for the girl. At present this system is gradually changing. In general Sevayat's women are restricted to their homes. Even after marriage, the movements of the women are restricted till they give birth to a child. In many cases the rickshaw is covered with clothes if any Sevayat women go outside in rickshaw. The ladies cover their head and face with cloth while going outside. But this system is going to disappear gradually. They are enjoying freedom. Every year in the month of 'Pausa' the bride visits her father's house. This system is also followed by the general people. This is because in the temple, Lord's consort Goddess Laxmi visits her father's house in this month.

### Jagagharas

Jagagharas are paramilitary organizations which originated in Puri particularly in Sahis (localities) during the rule of the Gajapati Kings to protect the Jagannath temple from the attack of the Muslims. The young Sevayats start exercises like body building, wrestling, weight lifting, sword fighting and Javelin throws not only to maintain good health but to fight the Muslim enemies physically. A Jagaghara possesses acres of land encircled by strong wall with a pond to bath and a deity Hanuman to worship.

Besides military activities, the Jagagharas are centres of learning and culture. Odissi dance, Chhanda, Champu, musical instrument like Mrudanga, Gotipua dance, Medha dance are also performed here. Feasts and Bhanga are common in the Jagagharas. A Jagaghara plays a great role culturally in connection with the Jagannath temple during Ramanavami and Chandan Jatra.

### Naga, Medha and Gotipua Dance

During the time of Sahijata, Chandan Jata and Makar Sankranti the young men of the Jagagharas being dressed like warriors march in procession to other Sahis to perform martial dance like Naga dance to commemorate the past. Some other members of the Jagagharas perform Medha dance in which *puranic* stories of Lord Rama are performed during summer every year.

In the last part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Gotipua dance was introduced in Puri, when Devadasi dance was in a declining stage. Gotipua dance performed by male dancers. This dance was patronized by monasteries of Puri. In the dance Vaishnav songs describing the *lilas* of the incarnation of Lord Krishna are sung. Later on the Odissi dance emerged from Gotipua dance.

### Devadasis

Unmarried girls become Devadasis to dance before Lord Jagannath. They marry to Lord Jaganath. Devadasis also danced in King's palace and social functions of dignitaries of the town during kings rule. But in the later period the Devadasis were exploited by Sevayats of the temple and the king. Their sex relationship with such persons brought ill fame to them. As a result the Devadasi numbers gradually decreased. At present one Devadasi named Sashimani lives who is very old and spent life in poverty. The famous Odissi dance Guru Sri Pankaj Charan Das is the son of a Devadasi. He once remarked that "there is no future in it and it is very hard to make a living by it today". So his daughter is not a Devadasi.

### Yatras

Yatras (festivals) of the Jagannath temple have great influence on the society. Lord goes to



sleep at the time of 'Sayana Yatra' for a period of three months. During this period all social ceremonies such as marriage, Upanayana (sacred thread ceremony), coming of the bride to her father-in-laws house (Nava Badhu Yatra) are suspended. During the rising ceremony of the Lord (Devothana) all these social activities are resumed.

### Fairs and Festivals

The fairs and festivals of the temple have great social impact. The important festivals namely Chandan Yatra and Rath Yatra observed in the great temple in every summer are gladly participated by the Sevayats and the common people of Puri. In Chandan Yatra the participants of the Sahis start procession from their Jagagharas to the Narendra tank with much pomp and grandeur. Madanmohan the representative of Lord Jagannath is carried in a palanquin to the tank to move around the tank in boats which is called as *chappa*. The people take bath in the Narendra tank in large number in the evening and after returning to the starting point they take pleasure of consuming the Mahaprasad. The Rath Yatra (Car festival) is performed in the month of July in which besides the pilgrims, the people of Puri take part along with the Daitapatis and other Sevayats for nine days in lakhs. The houses of every inhabitants of Puri enjoy the guests in feeding and entertaining in order to derive pleasure. In Bahuda Yatra (return of the cars) at the time of 'Adharapana' the people of every house in Puri in company with guests take pleasure of consuming 'Rasgola'. Culturally it promotes a healthy social life. 'Adharapana' though offered to the deities while on chariots really meant for the Chandis and Chamundas who are waiting for this occasion in every year.

### Muktimandapa

Cases involving religious controversies in any part of Odisha are referred to the Muktimandap which stands as the judiciary of the temple. This Muktimandap is the famous seat of the learned Brahmins associated with Jagannath temple and the verdict pronounced by this august assembly of Brahmins of Solasasanas (16 Brahmin Sasana villages) is accepted by the contending parties with great respect. Thus the Muktimandap solves a number of social problems of the Hindus of Odisha.

### Swargadwar

Swargadwar (gateway to heaven) is a cremation ground at Puri, situated in the sea shore of the Bay of Bengal. It is meant only for the Hindus. The people believe that if the dead body of a person is cremated in the Swargadwar the deceased soul goes to heaven. The soul needs no cycle of birth and rebirth. Among the Sevayat community if a Sevayat dies then his dead body is cremated at Swargadwar after bringing the fire from the kitchen of the temple of Lord Jagannath. It is their special privilege and different from others. This tradition is still maintained among the Sevayat families of Puri. This is a significant social feature of Swargadwar.

### Some common social features

Many social activities have common link to the cult of Jagannath. In Odia society Lord Jagannath is considered as the head of their families. In all social functions like marriage and sacred thread ceremony the Lord is first invited. One begins a letter by first putting the Lord's name at the top. It is usual practice to humbly remember the Lord's name at the top in order to make an auspicious beginning. From birth to death in all activities, the local people take the name of the



Lord. The people offer their best things to the Lord.

During the Rath Yatra festival of the Lord all kinds of trees are planted. The newly built houses are being inaugurated, because these days are considered to be the most auspicious. The first fruit of a tree is offered to the deities. Even newly published books prayer to Lord is written in the first page. When the children are born or saved from calamities or severe diseases, the parents go to the temple to offer one lakh lamps to the Lord. Men are named after Him, as Jagannath Das, villages as Jagannathpur and market as Jagannath haat etc. People offer gold ornaments when their problems are easily overcome. His temple is Bada Deula. His road is called as Badadanda (Grand Road). His sea is named as Mahodadhi.

Marriages are social customs of the Hindus. So the marriage is sacred. Some marriages are being held in the Jagannath temple with his approval which is equivalent to registered marriage. Even before marriage negotiations are being held in the Surya temple which exists in the premises of the great temple and guests take pleasure for consuming Mahaprasad after negotiation.

Another social institution like common sacred thread ceremony which is performed on behalf of the temple and also organized by some social organizations in which many a number of Brahmin boys altogether take sacred thread in the premises of the temple of the Lord. Generally poor Brahmin boys perform their sacred thread ceremony in this temple because of poverty. Thus the temple of Lord Jagannath solves a lot of our social problems. Hence the Jagannath temple is inevitable in the social order of the Hindus.

The impact of the cult of Jagannath is deep rooted in the social life of the people of Puri in particular and Odisha in general. Undoubtedly, without the cult of Jagannath the existence of a unique society of the Sevayats in Puri would be an impossible one. Their life style, the marriage system, the dowry less society, no divorce, ideology of Jagagharas, message for promotion of casteless society through Mahaprasad indicate that they are much above the evils of modern society.

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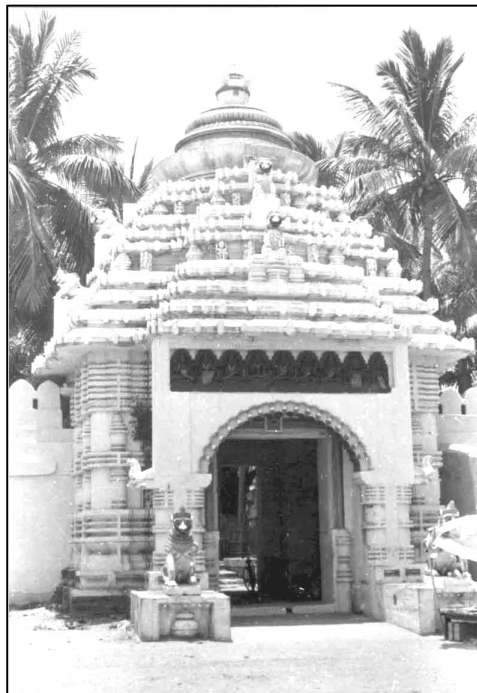
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## Significance of Gundicha Temple in Car festival

*Bhagaban Mahapatra*

Gundicha temple is a Hindu temple, popularly known as GARDEN HOUSE of Lord Jagannath, situated in Puri town of Odisha. It lies at a distance of about 3 K.M. from the main temple of Lord Jagannath (Srimandira). The two temples are located at two ends of Bada Danda (Grand Road) which is the pathway of Rath Yatra. The temple is built in Kalinga temple style. The complex of the temple comprises Viman (sanctum), Jagamohan, Natamandira and Bhogamandap. There is also a kitchen hall. The temple is set within a garden and is known as God's Summer Garden Retreat. In the garden there are Coconut, Mango, Neem, Bael trees and other favourite plants of Lord like Tulasi, rose and Jasmine flowers etc. The entire complex of the temple including garden is surrounded by a wall of 430 ft length, 320ft breadth with 20ft height.



Inside the temple, the sanctum features a plain raised platform 4ft height and 19ft long made

of chlorite stone called Ratnavedi where deities are placed and worshipped for seven days. Rest of the days of the year, the Ratnavedi and the temple remain vacant. This Ratnavedi is regarded as most holy place as narrated in Skanda Purana and Narad Purana. The temple has three gates. The western gate is the main gate of the temple called lion's gate through which deities enter the temple during Ratha Yatra. The eastern gate of the temple is known as NAKACHANA GATE which is used for departure of deities. There is also another gate towards north which is known as north gate.

There are many interesting legends behind the Gundicha temple and annual Ratha Yatra. One legend says that Gundicha, queen of king Indradyumna of Satya Yuga was a great devotee of Lord Jagannath. It is explained in many Puranas that Lord Jagannath surrenders Himself near His real devotees. Because of her (Gundicha) deep devotion, Lord



Jagannath promises her to come to her house during Ratha Yatra. Another legend says that Gundicha temple is Yagnya Vedi which is the birth place of Chaturddha Murtty (Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, Maa Subhadra and Sudarsan). Every year Lord with His brother and sister makes visit for seven days to the Gundicha temple on this occasion.

The Ratha Yatra starts on the second lunar day (Dwitiya), the bright fortnight (Sukla Paksha) of the Hindu month Asadha. One day before the Ratha Yatra, the Gundicha Temple is religiously cleansed for housing of Lords. On the day of Ratha Yatra, three wooden chariots magnificently built with wooden and beautifully decorated with flowers and clothes are kept ready at the main Jagannath temple for transportation of deities. The chariot carrying Lord Jagannath is called Nandighosh, the chariot carrying Balabhadra is called Taladhwaja and the chariot carrying Subhadra is called Darpadalan. All the deities start their nine days journey from the temple with a grand procession called Pahandi ceremony with servitors, Vedadhai Brahmins and devotees. The procession is a most thrilling and spectacular incident. After the deities are kept in their respective chariots, the traditional Chherapanhara work is done by the Gajapati (King) of Puri who is regarded as first servitor of Lord Jagannath. All devotees anxiously wait to see this event. After this event, chariots are drawn by lakhs of devotees to the Gundicha temple. The deities remain in the chariots on the first day and enter Gundicha temple on the second day. They reside at the Gundicha temple for the subsequent seven days. During this seven days sojourn, a major ceremony celebrated in the Gundicha temple is Hera Panchami (on the 5th day of Ratha Yatra). While Jagannath visits Gundicha temple with His brother and sister, His wife Lakshmi is left behind in the main temple (Sri Mandira) and also not even informed before His

journey. That wounded the sentiment of mother Lakshmi. She was so perplexed because of absence of Lord Jagannath and finding no alternative, She went to Vimala, wife of Lord Balabhadra and Saraswati wife of Lord Jagannath to seek their advice. Both of them shared the feelings of Lakshmi. Vimala is the goddess of Tantric. Consoling Lakshmi, goddess Vimala has advised Her to excite Lord Jagannath through Tantric application that is Moha Churna, so that His mind will be diverted and immediately He will return to Srimandir. Lakshmi has accepted the proposal and on 5th day of Rath Yatra popularly known as Hera Panchami, Lakshmi visits the Gundicha Temple in a beautifully decorated Palanquin through Her servitors in the evening. She is then welcomed into the temple. Both husband and wife (Lord Jagannath and Lakshmi) seat face to face on the porch in the sanctum of the Gundicha Temple. Goddess Lakshmi secretly applies that Moha Churna on Lord Jagannath and requests Him to return to Srimandir. Jagannath gives His consent by offering Agyan Mala (a garland of consent) which goddess accepts and after certain rituals She returns to Srimandir. Before returning to vent Her self-concealed anger She orders one of Her attendants to damage a portion of the chariot of Lord Jagannath. A large number of devotees congregate to see this event. Goddess Lakshmi then returns to Srimandira through a separate path known as Heragohari Lane.

On the next day of Hera Panchami, three chariots stand facing to Gundicha temple (western gate) prepare the Dakshinamoda ceremony for return car festival (Bahuda Yatra). It takes three days to turn the face of chariots in south direction from main gate of the temple and park the same at eastern gate (Nakachana Gate) through which deities leave the temple.



The day before the Bahuda Ratha Yatra (Return Car Festival), is a most auspicious day for devotees in Gundicha temple. This day is known as Sandhya Darshan or Navami Darshan. Some say it as Adap Mandap Darshan. In side the temple where deities are worshipped is known as Adap Mandap and also Mahabedi. It is said and also narrated in Skanda Puran that those who get the opportunity of seeing the deities at evening time on this day, the auspiciousness and virtuous are ten times more than the day time.

*“Dibatad darshanam punyam ratrau  
dasagunam vabet”*

(Skanda Puran Ch.34 Sloka 10)

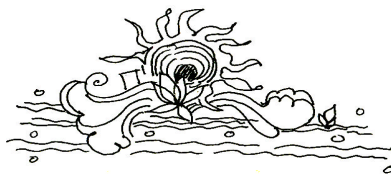
As per tradition on this day thousands of devotees throng the temple to have *darshan* of deities and partake of Mahaprasad with their family and offer to Brahmins for getting blessings. After spending seven days in the Gundicha temple, the return journey of Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Chakraraj Sudarshan starts on ninth day of car festival which is known as Bahuda Yatra (Return Car Festival). The images of deities are brought from the temple through Nakachana Gate in a grand procession of Pahandi ceremony to the accompaniment of enchanting Vedas and Stotras by Brahmins and of the beats of cymbals and gongs, the sounds of conches being blown.

The deities are taken to the same chariots in which they were brought and after some rituals particularly the traditional Chherapanhara (sweeping of the chariots) by the Gajapati of Puri, the chariots are pulled by devotees back to the main temple. It is considered auspicious to get a glimpse of the deities on their chariots. The colorful dance of devotees and other religious groups surcharge the entire atmosphere into a state of excitement and the individual self merges into an inexplicable ecstasy.

There is no comparable God in the world pantheon with intense human appeal, like Lord Jagannath Who has become a humanized God, crossing all barriers of caste, creed and colour under the gigantic wheels of His chariot. The most distinctive feature of Rath Yatra of Puri is the close and peculiar religious linkage of Gajapati of Puri with Lord Jagannath. Sweeping of the chariots by the king before the multitude of devotees is the height of religious devotion and greatness. Besides such a grand festival of Lord Jagannath suggests equality of human beings before the God.

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Bhagaban Mahapatra, Sri Gundicha Vihar, Sarbodaya Nagar, Puri-752002.





## Stranger Than Fiction

*Er. Chakradhar Mohanta*

Endeavors ever live. Memories never fade away.

“At the exasperating moments of the fateful event, the memories labored on and on, churned and agitated persistently in live. Pearls of tears were trickling down profusely from two wide lotus eyes, charioting the agony of Nandighos”.

“Is it to be a curse to be a bewitching romantic beauty “?

“Doth celestial nymph took birth on globe for its curse redemption” ?

Causing cessation to psychic will force, “Ketaki” found there standing nearest to the Emperor Sri Sri Divya Singh Dev, feeling the living Lord, Narayana incarnated, King Gajapati arms stretched open to embrace her ! Ketaki jumped up with an uproarious sound-

“O Load ! Cast thee in me not, unchaste thy servant”.

Vestige of Yavana, me cursed and fallen !!!  
Ketaki’s eyes were unbearable to feel the world  
brimming with tears.

For the moment she transverse and enthroned to the ended eventuality.

Lord of universe Lord Jagannath ever merciful this devotees through architect God Viswakarma created “Ketaki” – the full burning ignite blazing fire figure of love to quench the yearning gaiety of His devotee servant King Gajapati Maharaja and the enchantress was indeed an enticing unique beauty modal from the workshop of architect of heaven. It appeared as though the creator filled butter in place of flesh in Ketaki as her golden fairness blackened at the ogle of an ogler. King Divya Singh Dev lost himself in the endless beatitude of Ketaki’s drawing cervian eyes, plausible cyno hairs of secretive colour of



clouds, enduring and lofty, and, obstinate and majestic bosom pair, slender waist, attractive griddle and appearing hip and endearing naval pit. The fact that the Bali Sahi spring palace of Sri Divya Singh Dev melt in the rhythmic throbs and longing appetitive fragrance emanated from the



extreme glamorous igneous figure of Ketaki to the late night was not unknown to the ministers and citizens, in the 6th year (Anka) of King Divya Singh Dev's rule in Odisha.

The wheel of time is never ever amiable to one. The auspicious happy hours of Ketaki courtesan took a turn.

The spies reported to King Gajapati that Suba Nayeb Nazim Suja Khan coming to plunder Srimandir of Lord Jagannath and construct a Mosque with the derbies of Jagannath Temple. King Divya Singh Dev was plucked and uprooted. He was fully aware of the strength, brutality and hate redness towards Hindus of Suba Nayeb Nazim Sujakhan the Nawab of Murshidabad. The secret dream heart kept elusive and wretched designs of Sujakhan to play his mast at the Khurda Fort were well known to King Divya Singh Dev, though not known to many.

Suja Khan's convictions were true that Lord Jagannath Place and placeth the core and center of independence of Utkal Kingdom. Lord Jagannath is an exception to the Laws, rules and rulings of the rest of the globe. Nowhere on earth is existent that the dear Deity is the ruler of the Kingdom. Every Utkal born believed that the successful conquest of Kanchi was the blessings of Lord Jagannath. Lord Narayana embodies the celestial wood. Daru Brahma, a fullness, and absolute incarnation, knowledge and bliss, with hand gesture of all protection, sheltering from all fears quaims and sins, and careth and rareth Odisha and her children.

Lord Jagannath is a member of every Utkal family. Because He is one being the supreme involved and invited in every family affairs. He is the eldest of any family to be in all auspicious functions – Marriages, reception to the newly wedded both in groom's and bride's homes, tonsure ceremonies and even in the play of

children in the home, court yard and jungle. Offerings at His Feet – a grain of rice or a basil leaf or a millimeter length of His Chariot's rope is reverently kept by every Odia to the close of one's life.

He symbolizes the equality, secularism, universal brotherhood, unity and peace. He is the supreme being of oneness of all religions. He is the primordial energy and essence incarnation. He is the living idol of all religious existence, bliss absolute. But and yet every Odia is divinely selfish to keep Narayana, the Lord Jagannath in everyone's dwelling shelter shut as one's own and none else's keeping pride and proud of Him.

Suja Khan also learnt that Lord Jagannath alone is the Emperor of Odias, why because, emperor Sri Ananga Bhim Dev sacrificed and surrendered the whole of Utkal at lotus feet of Lord Jagannath and carried out the rule of Utkal State as His ordinary servant of Servant. In the history of Odisha, Governorship and eldership, social and cultural innings, and daily events and spiritual heritage evolved and revolved around the half built Jagannath. Suja Khan deeply felt that if Lord Jagannath would be taken out from Odisha, it would be the only victory and real victory to him. Wealth, youth, aristocracy and ignorance filled to the head notorious Suja Khan was intolerant even to assimilate the pure definition of "Holy Islam".

"Islam meanth Peace".

Islam means holy peace. It means total and complete surrender to God. Mercy and universal humanity is the hymn – Holy Quran prophetheth. Thy religion is thine; my religion is mine. Irreligious feelings find no place in Holy Quran.

Dead headed with untruth, Suja Khan pressured that Islam was propagated with might of sword and dared to eb another 'Kalapahad'.



At that turning point of history, King Divya Singh Dev supplicated before Ketaki for her grace. Ketaki the great intellect, feminine beauty and embodiment of Zodiac Virgo. To halt the march of Suja Khan, on the bank of river Bhargavi, at Chandanpur, King Gajapati created the barricades, bunker, barracks and tents. But the terms and thousands of proud warriors, the Khurda Paikas were no match to arrest the treacherous and brutal Mughal army of Suja Khan. King Gajapati had enough weaponry to fight the enemy in a straight ethical and lawful war. But he had nothing with him to arrest the covert and immoral movements of the brutes. At the end Gajapati solicited the service of Ketaki.

At Chandanpur, on the banks of river Bhargavi, Gajapati camped with his army on the Puri side and opposite to him the Mughal Missionary Suja Khan with blood and women flesh thirsty army, the offensive force exploring loose moment and movement and weakness and slackness to attack.

In the Royal Camp of Divya Singh Dev Ketaki Mahan arrived. Fading face of Gajapati cut deep wounds in Ketaki's heart. King Divya Singh Dev held Ketaki to his heart. The inside chamber of war camp of Gajapati was fully decorated with flowers and creepers and wine, elixirs, gold, silver and diamonds filled earthen silver and gold vessels.

"What ? Hath His Highness lost His sense !  
Oh Lord ! Is this the time for love and romance !!  
Is this the beginning of the end;  
His Majesty's grand began  
Worship of being in beatitude  
Ever immersed and lived through!"

Ketaki abstained from enquiry ! She feared heavy mouth from a small head and heart. Sitting on the flower decked bed, for the moment with a high heave, King Divya Singh Dev held Ketaki to his bear chest and kept on his left lap.

Wonder struck Ketaki lost in herself wondering the advance of Gajapati was the dying wick of the burning light of Deepavali.

Gajapati Maharaja Sri Sri Divya Singh Dev had made many pilgrimages and holy dips in sky covered holy shrine of Ketaki Mahari and had explored dived deep and dined her beauty.

Ketaki's eyes fell at the war barrack of enemy Suja Khan who camped on the other side of the river Bhargavi. Running the silvery glittering long crystal fingers through the enviable manly hairy bush hard chest of Divya Singh Dev, Ketaki enquired:

"Your Majesty ! Me knoweth not thy wish demand thy servant's presence here."

"Ketaki" replied in heavy tone and serious voice, the Maharaj Gajapati Sri Sri Divya Singh Dev. "You will be the commander-in-Chief of the battle tomorrow".

"Me. An earthling. A woman, O Majesty Doth thee ridicule this innocent."

"Ketaki ! Do you ever remember that I ever ridiculed you ?

"It's my priced and precious luck, Your Highness, Servant of Lord Jagannath"

"I invited you to save the pride of Lord Jagannath, the Lord of Universe, O Ketaki"

"Thy doth give me shame more, no more, Your Majesty. Thy the Victorious Gajapati.

Lord of Yadavas Lord of numerous citizens.

An being of Utkal and Karnataka.

Ever adorning groom.

Your Majesty undefeated ever

How warranth, help from insignificant Ketaki ?

Am I lucky so enough ?



Strength do get I where from ?

“Ketaki, Have you ever heard the coronation ceremony of Gajapati Kings in Utkal ?

“Your Majesty”

“Me ! Not His Majesty, Ketaki. Lord Jagannath the Lord of island Jambu is alone the real ruler of Utkal thence and hence. He is seated on the diamond royal throne and is worshipped with all brilliance and royalty attached to an Emperor as the Lord of the three worlds. I am only a mere servant. By heredity and heritage I am His servant of Servant. It is why as an untouchable I broom His chariot during car festival”. The throat of Gajapati started chocking.

“Your Majesty”, Ketaki buried her face on warmth at his chest and pressed to solace.

“Ketaki, would you please fulfill my only request ?

“Your Majesty. Thy command is my bearing on my head. Bless Thy servant, to be fearless. If needed be to cut my head and offer at Thy feet. Be merciful and I beseech thy blessings”. The dazzling beauty Ketaki felt at the feet of Sri Sri Divya Singh Dev. Gajapati lovingly lifted her up and addressed.

“Ketaki, it is not my direction. You may kindly grace it as my humble plea in tomorrow’s battle you alone will be the Commander-in-Chief”.

“Thy self, O Majesty !

“For the first time King Gajapati of Utkal could have gone in self exile in the history “Mandala Almanac my enumerate this incident. What an irony of Fate !”

The valorous and prowess face of Gajapati got darkened, as the sky was cast with clouds.

“Your Majesty ! Illustrious Lord ! I am devoid of the art of archery and weaponry.”

“Ketaki ! Thou shall know not thyself fully, what thy being. Thy enchanting figure like climbing creeper stem is an arrow latched bow. Thy two bosoms are two sides of bow. In that tow, drawing the arrow of enthralling enjoyment and union, igniting passion fire eye to eye thy should aim and shoot. In such piercing arrow fire, what to talk of Sujakhan-o-Sujakah, the God himself gets defeated. This is my firm conviction.

The bows of bamboos are insignificant compared to thine flower body bow. There is unawareth of this truth. Thy beauteous figure is explosive weapon. Stunning and alluring thy wavy vibrant physical expressions are the weaponry inductions and attacks. This is the secret. This is the success. This may kindly be born at head and heart”.

Hearing His Majesty, instantly Ketaki became dumbfound like the brutal coldness of deathly silence. Seeing the deadly silence of Ketaki Gajapati Maharaja Sri Sri Divya Singh Dev with full of love heartily and dearly held her to his chest and slowly whispered in her ears:

“Ketaki ! My dear !! This is neither my order nor my direction nor the request.

Feel and accept this as the word and command of Lord Jagannath and He and Himselfveeth. Doth you desire Suja Khan conquer Khurdagarh causing Gajapati dynasty of Load Jagannath servitude crest fallen buried beneath mud under the domain of Suja Khan ? Kindly doth mistake me not ! Misconceive me not ! I beg and seek this sacrifice from Thee not for me. I beg thee to save our Motherland Utkal and protect the chastity of her daughters from the hands of demonic Mughal Devil”.

Soothing and coolly warming the heat of King Divya Singh Dev with the hot tear pearls tricking down from the wide eyes of Ketaki she



slowly and steadily invoked and instilled the confidence in His Majesty.

“Thy wilts and wish the command of Lord Jagannath. It shall be fulfilled at all cost, Your Majesty”.

The dawn dawned and the Sun appeared in the eastern horizon. Ketaki had witnessed many sun-rise, it's different cosmic forms and rays in varying hours of a day like the Sun above the fog covered thorax of Bengal bay of cold season, setting Sun of the summer at the evening skies over the mountain of Barunei, Khurda and the Sun at the noon during the rainy days. But the Sun of that day appeared very unfamiliar to Ketaki – The Sun without dazzling ! The Sun without warmth !! The Sun without radiant rays !!!

Stealthily navigating river Bhargavi Suja Khan pierced in to the Royal Camp of King Divya Singh Dev. Endowed with brutal power of muscle and killing instincts, Suja Khan with might was ready to attack the Royal chamber was taken aback ! His day dreaming of previous day and war calculations that Sri Divya Singh Dev would for his survival saving his life might fall begging at his feet struck with no trace of Sri Divya Singh Dev ! It was unexpected to his war conception that Sri Divya Singh Dev would go in self exile. Suja Khan was full of praises for the Royal King of Khurda, for his courage to receive arrows on face to face straight fight. The heritage of Khurda King dynasty never inscribed in memory that any King had run away back from war leaving the citizens to the mercy of enemy King.

Seeing Suja Khan advancing with dancing poses, sending the feeling vibrations of union ignition, enticing with mysterious glances, rarest cupid arrows and amorous gestures, longing the enchanting fairy beatitudes to be sucked by Suja Khan's manly might, signaling the half covered signet bewitching heavenly cosmic beauty figure

rhythmic waves of coaxing for copulate, Ketaki appeared from the inner royal chamber of the camp !!! Emanating exquisite fragrance, bedecked bed with rarest and heavenly flowers of royal dreams, nine diamonds filled historic vessels, rarest jewelleries, gold, pearls and blue diamonds, and blissful breeze from river Bhargavi adding the symphony and notes to the romantic presence of heavenly nymph Ketaki Mahari with her eyes ‘ irresistible rapier love, in fact, transformed the Royal Chamber inciting Suja Khan in to an appetitive erotic aphrodisiac existence.

“This is the supreme fire ordeal. It is the wish of my Lord Jagannath. He and alone He shalt protect me” Ketaki prayed. Courageous Ketaki became mystically elusive. Enough events were enumerated that even Gods were beaten down their heads with such feminine beauty. Enticing and inviting Ketaki made Suja Khan forget himself. Protruding breasts, flowery naval pit, bird's like bluish restless eyes, captivating and enchanting slender waste, tender body and again above all the stiff stout obstinate and untamed bosoms were the unique unparallel elements of love. Great is God ! He mixed all radiance, chemicals all beauties, catalyzed all youthfulness, and peptized all vigour and exuberance in to Ketaki, or, each limb of her excelled and marvelled in delicate loveliness as slaves at her command !

“Who are you”? Electrifying voice of Suja Khan echoed. Delicate, demanding and describing Ketaki, angelic and bashful Ketaki and golden Ketaki drew lines on floor with her left toe sending gestures that she was avid, zest and zealous for Suja Khan.

“Your Majesty ! I am the Commander-in-Chief of Khurda Gajapati”. Thick eyebrows of Suja Khan curled up and he yelled.

“Commander-in-Chief ! Shalt thee fight with me ?” Sending straight liaison eye twinkling



to Suja Khan's eyes with gestures for love she uttered.

"With one condition, Your Highness. Thy shalt retreat to Cuttack in Thy defeat in war with me. Thy shalt not harm any to Lord Jagannath. Thy shalt leave me here alone".

"God Promise ! Nayeeb Nazim Suja Khan's word is stronger than a tusker's tooth. I promise, should I get defeated in war with thee, I shalt return to Cuttack. But my darling ! In case thy faceth defeat, this creature will lift Thee with Jagannath to Cuttack".

The war began. Everything is right and fine in war and love. Poor Sujakhan was never been an expert in love-making, had no patience and bearing, stamina and timely deliverance, and, cessation and audacity in Love. In the divine cupid merriness of Ketaki, Suja Khan was shamed and defeated at his masculine ego. Hung in shame and failure Suja Khan fell at the feet of Ketaki pleading privacy, secrecy and mercy. Humiliated and dishonoured of his manhood before womanhood necessity and demands of Ketaki Nayeeb Nazim Suja Khan retreated to Cuttack. Keeping his promise, leaving Ketaki at the deserted Royal Camp of Divya Singh Dev, Suja Khan's parting words were thus :

"Good Heavens !! Thy won the war before the beginning of war !!! I retreat to Cuttack keeping my words. Please accept my last prayers and salutations, Khudahafis !"

Suja Khan could have harmed Ketaki. But he did not. In the meantime Gajapati Divya Singh Dev had kept Lord Jagannath, Goddess Subhadra and Lord Balabhadra in Kotalgarh fort and Suja Khan could not have done any harm to divine Idols.

x x x x

The divine clasp and embrace of Living Lord Narayana, Lord Jagannath, Gajapati Divya Singh Dev brought Ketaki to sudden present ceasing her previous night events with tears.

"Your Majesty ! What thy did ! My body is impure !!!" Ketaki wept heartbroken. "I am fallen and not worthy to thy noblest touch".

Sobbing Ketaki could not see any as her eyes were filled with tears. Her heart was heavy. Her throat was choked. Waning and wailing Ketaki cried like a child. Her words and cries were not separable. "Yavana tasted me" sobbing and sighing Ketaki fell on the ground. "Even the Hell does reject me", feeble voice poured from Ketaki incoherently. Odias' walking and living Lord Jagannath in human form Emperor Gajapati Sri Sri Divya Singh Dev lifted Ketaki up and clasped with his long two arms around her tender falling waist. Holding to his chest, embracing her Gajapati lifted her face with slender feather touch on chin where tears were rollicking down over Ketaki's cheeks.

"Every Odia is proud and knows, for Gajapati garlands with his own hands the victorious Commander-in-Chief with diamond studded Gold fastener of chivalry, gallantry and honour. For it is and it is I wear Thee my two hands of fasteners of gallantry honour and bravery to thee Ketaki. Would Thou shalt reject them Ketaki"?

"Your Highness"

"Ketaki ! Thou did fulfill the command of Lord Jagannath. That Lord, who is Lord of ruined and fallen and Lord who purifies all sins, has taken away all thy sins. I believe Thy is not impure. Offering Thy physical form to Mughal brute, thy did save Lord from his atrocious hands. By His will thy body has turned into Holy and Holy Water, revered, adored, and worshipped. The Ketaki



Teertha, new Ganges is this Land. Thy charm and chastity saved.

Our Great Temple,  
Huge Chariots,  
Heavenly Offerings,  
Devotional rituals,  
Large Heart,  
World-renowned Hospitality,  
And Universal Brotherhood.

Above all thy alone and alone saved our God to be amongst us daily. Thus Lord Jagannath made you the holiest. Thy physical form is the rarest Holy Ketaki Teertha. Touching Thee, blesseth me more than a lakh pilgrims dip in holy waters. Thy is to me the Holiest Divine. King Gajapati Sri Sri Divya Singh Dev witnessed auspiciousness and tranquility in the teardrops of Ketaki, which reflected the Sun. the greatest devotee of Lord Jagannath, Gajapati, worshipped the eyes of Lord Jagannath in the two round eyeballs of Ketaki. He surrendered all his sins, smiles, pains, virtues, and purity in those two broad eyes and became one.

And at that moment took birth a legend immoral though in the millions of minds across the terrains spreading from Godavari to Krishna-Kaveri, gradually lost its youth till its funeral was lit in the graveyard of the century at the direction of Lord Jagannath and was a forgotten affair !

### References :

1. Nandighosh – The Holy Chariot of Lord Jagannath drawn during Car Festival in Puri.
2. Viswakarma – The celestial Architect in Hindu Mythology.
3. Srimandir – Where the Holy idols of Lord Jagannath, Goddess Subhadra and Lord Balaram installed.
4. Kanchi – An old Kingdom of the south (Presently Tamil Nadu)
5. Narayana – God who preserves the cosmoses among the trinity Gods.
6. Daru – The Holy Wood Lord Narayana incarnated.
7. Kalapahad – The King of Bengal who plundered Puri Temple.
8. Paikas – The patriot proud warrior community of Gajapati Maharaja generally from the land – Khurda.
9. Mahan – Cartesian.
10. Yadavas – The community dearest to Lord Krishna.
11. Mandala Almanac - Traditional and ancient astronomical calculations for all rituals.
12. Snailingly Slowly and slowly.
13. Sujakhan - Naib Nazim of Cuttack in Mughal period from 1727 to 1739 AD.

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## The Car Festival of Lord Jagannath : Unique in many respect

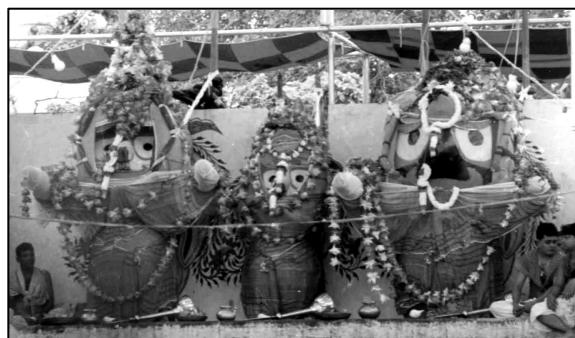
*Dr. Sidhartha Kanungo*

The Ratha Yatra or Car Festival of Puri, dedicated to Lord Jagannath, is the most famous and the most spectacular of festivals which attracts countless pilgrims from all over India and also from abroad. This festival takes place in Asadha Sukla Dwitiya when the images of Lord Jagannath, along with siblings are taken out of His sanctum sanctorum in a grand procession on three separate chariots along the Badadanda from Shrimandira to Gundicha Mandira.

The whole cycle of the Car Festival consists of the following : (i) Snana Yatra or The Bath Festival, (ii) Anasara, (iii) Netra Utsab, (iv) Naba Jaubana Darsana, (v) Pahandi or the ceremonial procession of images (vi) "Chherapanhara" or the sweeping of the floor of the chariots with a golden broom by the Gajapati Maharaja of Puri, (vii) Stay of the Deities in "Gundicha Ghar" for 7 days, (viii) "Bahuda Yatra" or the return journey of Gods (ix) The final return of the Lords to the temple.

As stated earlier, the Ratha Yatra takes place on the Second day of the bright fortnight in the month of Asadha. But the actual preparation starts much earlier from the Magha Saptami with the cutting of trees in distant Daspalla and nearby areas for providing the wood necessary for construction of chariots. On the third day of the

bright fortnight of Baisakh, i.e. Akshaya Tritiya, starts the auspicious construction of chariots on the Badadanda (Grand Road) of Puri. This day also bears enormous socio religious significance. Farmers start agricultural activities on this day. It also marks the beginning of the sandalwood festival or Chandan Yatra, which lasts for three weeks. In this festival, the representative images of the presiding deities are given a ceremonial boat ride in the Narendra tank everyday.



The full moon day of the month of Jyestha, popularly known as 'Snana Purnima' marks the beginning of the Car Festival. On this day the three deities - Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra are taken to an open platform known as 'Snana Bedi' (bathing platform). Here they take a prolonged bath with one hundred and eight pitchers of perfumed water drawn from a



temple well once in a year. After the Snana Yatra, the deities are supposed to fall ill (fever) and do not return to their throne. Then they stay away from public view for a period of 15 days. This period is popular as 'Anasara'. During this period, no public worship is performed. On the New Moon Day of the month of Asadha the deities reappear in their Nabayaubana Vessa. The seclusion finally ends when, after 15 days of isolation, the Lords come out of the temple in a colourful procession to board their respective Chariots and thereafter begins the journey known as "Ratha Yatra."



The Ratha Yatra falls on the second day of the bright fortnight of Asadha. On this occasion the images of Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshana are installed on three separate chariots in a grand procession called "*Pahandi*". It is the most colourful show of the Car Festival in which the idols are held tightly in the arms by Daitapatis and pulled from behind and the front alternatively with the ropes tied firmly to Their bodies. Each image is made to jump from place to place and advance. It is worthwhile to mention here that the kind of emotional upsurge seen

among the crowd during the Pahandi of Sri Jagannath is seldom observed when the other deities i.e. Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshan are carried in Pahandi to the Chariot.



After all the deities are seated in their respective chariots starts the Chhera Pahanra another attraction of the festival eagerly awaited by devotees inspite of the scorching heat or rain as the case may be. The Gajapati King of Puri brought to the chariots in a decorated Palanquin and here the king sweeps the floors of the Chariots with a golden broom. This is known as Chhera Pahanra. It presupposes that no labour is detestable if it is required for social purpose.

Then comes the most exciting part of Ratha Yatra the pulling of chariots by thousands of devotees without distinction of caste, colour, sex or religion. First moves the Chariot of Balabhadra, next Subhadra and finally Jagannath's Chariot. Usually they reach the Gundicha temple the same evening. The deities enter the Gundicha Temple on the next day in the usual Pahandi style and stay there for seven days.

Goddess Laxmi gets angry for not being allowed to go along with Lord Jagannath and



proceeds to the Gundicha Temple to meet Lord Jagannath on the Hera Panchami Day, the fifth day from the Ratha Yatra. After having a stealthy look at Her Lord, She returns to Shri Mandir, damaging a part of Jagannath's Chariot in anger and disgust.

As stated earlier, the Deities stay at Gundicha Temple for a period of seven days. Then starts their return journey or Bahuda Yatra. On His way back, Lord Jagannath stops for few minutes at Mausima Temple or the temple of aunt to take His favourite rice cake or Poda Pitha. On the next day, i.e. Bada Ekadasi, the Deities are attired in costumes of Glittering gold and are worshipped by thousand of devotees. This form of the deities is known as Suna Vesha.

On the day after Ekadasi, Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, Goddess Subhadra and Sudarshana return to the temple with the usual fanfare and in the Pahandi Style. Thus ends the Ratha Yatra, the grand festival of the Chariots.

It will not be out of place to mention something about the Chariots that the Lords mount. Without a strong determination, it is indeed very difficult to construct these Chariots within a short span of 58 days.

Lord Jagannath's Chariot is known as Nandighosa. It has a height of 45 feet. It has sixteen wheels, each of seven feet diameter and is decked with red and yellow coverings of cloth. The Sarathi or the Charioteer made of wood is known as Dahuka. "The Four horses attached to the Chariot are known as Samkha, Rochica, Mochica and Jwalani. They are painted white. The name of Ratha Pala is Shri Nrusingha. At the crest of the Chariot are the wheel and the image

of Garuda. The name of the flag of Nandighosa is Trailakyamohini. It may be pointed out that 832 pieces of wood are used for construction of Nandighosa. Nandighosa is draped in yellow cloth.

The Chariot of Lord Balabhadra, called Taladhwaja, has fourteen wheels each of seven feet *diameter with red and blue cloth*. It has a height of forty-four feet. The name of the Sarathi is Sudyaumna. The four wooden black horses attached to the Chariot bear the names of Sthira, Dhruti, Sthiti and Siddha. The Rathapala is Ananta and 763 pieces of wood are used in this Chariot. The name of the flag of the Chariot is Wnnani.

The Chariot of the Subhadra is known as Darpadalana; its height being forty three feet with twelve wheels, each of seven feet diameter. This Chariot is covered with red and black cloth. The name of Sarathi is Arjuna. Four wooden horses fixed to the Chariot are known as Prajha, Anuja, Ghora and Aghora. The Rathapalika is Vana Durga. 539 pieces of wood are used in this Chariot and the name of the Chariot is Nadambika.

The Ratha Yatra is being celebrated at Puri since long. It is indeed very difficult to say since when it exactly started. The festival will continue so long as the Sanatana Dharma exists on the earth.

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## Reference on Lord Purushottam in Odishan Inscriptions

Bharati Pal



Purushottama Jagannatha, the Lord of the universe, the supreme God has been worshipped in various names and forms, from time to time with different modes of doctrines and rituals. The literary and epigraphic sources throw considerable light on the revival of this cult.

The earliest epigraphic evidence regarding the Lord is found from the Kalian Copper Plate Grant of Sridharana Rata of Bengal, who flourished about second half of the 7th century A.D.

The plate describes that Sridharana was born to Bhanudevi, who was the *agramahish* (Chief Queen) of Jivadharana, whom the charter describes as *Parama Vaishnava* and a devout worshipper of Vishnu.

The next epigraphs is the Sripur Stone Inscription of Mahasivagupta. The inscription begins with an invocation to *Purushottama*.

The first three verses are elevated to the praise of *Narasimha* incarnation of *Vishnu* and construction of a temple for *Hari* by queen Vasata, the mother of Mahasivagupta.

The Gaya inscription which belongs to about the 7th decade of 9th century A.D. begins with an invocation to Purushottama and then immediately proceeds to describe and praise him.

“Who conquers as Jagatinatha ..... who appears as Narasimha..... Who has destructed by His nails the kings of the demon.

A stone inscription which found from Maihar in Satna district of Madhya Pradesh, beautifully narrates the story of a Brahman boy named Damodar, who was originally a son of Sarasvati and lived in the heaven. But once he defeated Bruhaspati, the preceptor of the gods in a disputation. He was cursed by the latter to go to earth. On the request of his mother, Bruhaspati ordained that the boy would not live long on the earth. When the young boy would undertake a pilgrimage to '*Purushottama* in the country of Odisha shall thereafter take a bath in the ocean where he shall be drowned and thus come back to heaven. The epigraphs belongs to the 10th Century A.D.

The Mehore plate of Damodoradeva, begins with invocation as “Om, on whose awakening the world comes to manifestation, in whom, while reposing, it becomes merged again instantaneously obeisance to that *Purushottama*.

The Nagpur stone inscription dated in Vikram Samvat 1160 (1104 A.D.) records the military campaign of the Paramara king Lakshmanadeva led towards Eastern India. The inscription describes “near the eastern ocean



cleaver men thus artfully proclaimed his praise, while he looked pleased on bashfully: 'O'- Lord, it was the holy *Purushottama* to whom fortune restored who relieved this universe by subduing the enemy *Bali* and who supported the earth."

The Kalidindi grant of eastern Chalukya Rajaraja describes in the introductory verse that *Brahma* as born from the lotus which grows from the navel of great Lord *Narayana Purushottama* at Sridham. Sridham or Sriksheeta is one of the names of the sacred area of Puri.

The cult of *Purushottama Jagannatha* took an important form with the construction of a temple for Lord *Purushottama* at the sea shore of Puri by Anantavarman Chodagangadeva. Chodagangadeva the founder of the Ganga dynasty occupied Utkala and shifted his capital from *Kalinganagara* to Kataka. Anantavarman like his predecessor was a great devotee of *Siva* and assumed the title *Parama Mahesvara*. But in the Korni Copper Plate grant he changed his attitude and appeared to demonstrate religious universality by applying to himself as *Parama Mahesvara Parama Vaishnava and Parama Brahmanaya*.

Many scholars have spoken of a conversion of Chodaganga from *Saivism* to *Vaishnavism* and think that due to the influence of Ramanuja this conversion took place. It was during his reign Ramanuja visited his kingdom and stayed at Puri. The effect of his visit was the change of the religious faith of Chodaganga who became a *Parama Vaishnava*.

The construction of a temple for God *Purushottama* at Puri by Chodaganga proves his inclination towards *Vaishnavism*. The first epigraphical record of the construction of the present *Purushottama* temple in the vicinity of ocean by the powerful monarch Chodaganga who coming from South, and subjugated the

*Utkaladesa* in the year 1112 A.D. is found in the Dasogaba copper plate grants of his grandson Rajarajadeva III, who succeeded the throne of Orissa after the death of his father Anangabhima III.

The first verse of this epigraph refers to the *Visvarupa* of Vishnu says that only Gangasvara could construct a suitable palace (Temple) for a God like *Purushottama*, whose feet are the earth, navel the mid region, the head the heaven, the ears the directions and the two eyes the sun and the moon respectively.

The second verse refers the joy of *Purushottama* and his consort *Lakshmi*. Till the construction of this residence (*vasa*) for *Purushottama*, he lived in the milk ocean, since ocean is the birth place of *Lakshmi*, *Purushottama* felt rather ashamed living there, since a respectable person is not accented proper honour if he lives in his father-in-law palace. He was therefore pleased to get a new place of residence for Himself and His wife *Lakshmi*. *Lakshmi* found residing independently in the house of her husband much preferable to living in her fathers house and hence she became very happy. Again in the verse 17 of the Nagari Plate of Anangabhima III states that Chodaganga built a temple for the God *Purushottama* at Puri on the sea shore of Bay of Bengal. The plate further describes that Lord *Purushottama* had been in worship at Puri for many years before the conquest of that region by Chodaganga, but that *Saivite* Somavamsi kings who were supplanted from Utkala by the Gangas had neglected the erection of a temple for the *Vaishnava* deity. *Purushottama Jagannatha* of Puri was originally worshipped by the aboriginal Savara people in an inaccessible forest on the Nilachal and that the priest of king Indradyumna of Avanti, who popularized the god, received information regarding the deity and his worship from a Savara named Visvasasu.



On the door jamb of the *Narasimha* temple there is an important inscription of Chodaganga which records offering of a perennial lamp (*Akhandavartika*) to Sri *Purushottama* by him.

The next important ruler after Chodaganga who patronized *Vaishnava* cult was Anangabhimha III. In many of his records he has described himself as a deputy of the Lord *Purushottama*. In the Nagari Plate he assumed the title Anangabhimha-Rautta-deva and by assuming this title he considered himself a mere deputy of the God *Jagannatha* of Puri whom he regarded as the real Lord of the kingdom. He is the first imperial Ganga monarch who so far known to have assumed the subordinate title *Rautta* and claimed theoretically at least to have been a feudatory of the God *Purushottama-Jagannatha*.

In the Draksharama temple inscription he stated himself as Parama Vaishnava and Parama *Mahesvara* as well as *Purushottama Putra*, *Rudra Putra* and *Durga Putra*. In this context we think that the formation of a Jagannatha Triad by Anangabhimha during his early years proves his ritual relationship with the three dominant deities of Odisha. *Purushottama* at Puri, *Lingaraj Siva* at Bhubaneswar and *Viraja* at Jajpur.

It was only under the king Anangabhimha Deva that the God *Purushottama* at Puri became official state deity of the Ganga empire. In the Bhubaneswar inscription which is dated 1230 A.D., he has been declared as a son and deputy of Lord *Purushottama* and similarly pronounced his dominions as *Purushottama Samrajya* and he was the servant of the God *Purushottama*.

In the same year his wife Somaladevi made an valuable donation to the God Vishnu Allaranatha at Kanchipuram. The inscription records the gift of the village named Udaiya Kamam in Antarudra vishaya by Somaladevi for

offering and worship to the god Allaranatha while she was at *Abhinava Varanasi Kataka*. The inscription dated in the 19th regnal year of Anangabhimha. The epigraphs further describes him as the son of Lord *Purushottama* and a Parama Vaishnava who regularly observed *Ekadasi-Vrata* and constantly meditated at the feet of his Lord and the grant was made by the command (*adesa*) of Lord *Purushottama*.

During the same year Anangabhimha has consecrated a temple for *Purushottama* in his newly capital *Abhinava Varanasi Kataka* and donated land to several *Brahmanas*. It is therefore quite logical that in one of his last inscriptions dated 1238 A.D. he declared his regnal year or Anka as the regnal year of Lord *Purushottama*. The sources leave no doubt that Anangabhimha acknowledged *Jagannatha* as the overlord of Orissa and remained his deputy.

According to the temple chronicle, king Anangabhimha has been renounced his royal consecration (*abhiseka*) because he considered himself only as the deputy of *Purushottama Jagannatha*.

The next ruler *Narasimha-I*, the son and successor of Anangabhimha III, followed the deputy ideology of his father, and like him he also declared himself a son and deputy of *Purushottama*, the Lord of the universe. In one of his inscriptions at Kapilas he stated that the king succeeded in subduing his enemies in numerous battles at the command of the God *Purushottama*. The God is none other than Lord *Purushottama Jagannath*, Who is worshipped in the temple of Puri. Further the epigraph describes *Narasimha* as *Paramavaishnava* and *Parama Mahesvara* as well as *Purusottama Putra*, who built a temple for Lord *Siva* at Kapilas hill.



But it is not surprising in view of the fact that his father Anangabhima himself is also called both *Parama Vaishnava* and *Parama Mahesvara* as well as *Purushottama Putra*, *Rudra Putra* and *Durga Putra* in one of his inscriptions in the Siva temple at Draksharama .

The next important ruler of the Ganga dynasty who considered himself as the mere deputy of Lord Purushottama was Bhanudeva. In his Puri inscription he called himself as Bhanudeva *Rautta* and declared his own regnal year as the prosperous and victorious reign of Sri *Purushottamadeva*. He considered himself as a deputy of the God in matter of ruling the Ganga dominion.

The Gangas were followed by the Suryavamsi Gajapatis. Under the able leadership of Kapilendra this dynasty emerged a very strong political force in Orissa. *Purushottama-Jagannatha* became their tutelary deity, which gleaned from numerous inscriptions. Kapilendra went even a step further and allowed his courtiers and priests to call him an elected of Jagannatha. The Warangal inscription of Raghudeva describes Kapilendra became a Lord of Utkala at the command of *Purushottama*, the Lord of the fourteen worlds.

The Madala Panji, the temple chronicle relates that Lord Jagannatha had ordered the last Ganga Bhanudeva IV in a dream to nominate Kapilendra as his successor.

The Warangal inscription describes in the first line the God *Vishnu* as the imperial ruler of the earth and apparently as the overlord of the emperor Kapilesvara of Suryavamsi Gajapati family of Orissa. The date of the record has been put against the background of eternity as it is represented as falling in the eternal reign period of the said god. This is because of the fact as it is presumed from the Ganga inscription that Anagabhima dedicated his kingdom in favour of

the God *Purushottama Jagannatha* of Puri, who is regarded as a form of *Vishnu*, and that the Ganga king's successor as well as the later imperial ruler of Orissa including their theoretical successors, the present Maharaja of Puri regarded themselves as the viceroy of the deity Who was considered the real Lord of the country. This conception is noticed in several inscriptions of the Ganga dynasty. The present epigraph is the only record out side the Ganga family which echoes the same idea. There is however a slight difference in the conception as found in the inscription under review. The idea expressed in our record is that the God was the Lord of the earth while Kapilesvara endowed with imperial style was the king of the Utkala country under him. This mode of introducing a king is possibly the only case of the kind in the whole range of Indian Epigraphy.

Further the inscription states that Kapilesvara assumed the title as Mahesvara-Putra, *Purushottama-Putra* and *Durga-Putra*. The above passage is copied from the records lies in the Draksharama, Bhubaneswar and Kanchipuram inscription of Anangabhima III and one of the Kapilas inscription of Narasimha I of Ganga. In the similar representation of Anangabhima III and his son Narasimha-I, one may notice the fact that these kings inspite of their staunch devotion to the God *Vishnu* in the shape of *Purushottama-Jagannatha* of Puri, could not possibly dissociate themselves totally from the Saiva leanings of their ancestors, since however the hold of *Vaishnavism* became gradually stronger and stronger on the kings of Orissa. It is rather strange that the same epithets were applied to Kapilesvara who flourished two centuries later. He was the first of its members who was devoted to the God *Purushottama - Jagannatha*.

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Bharati Pal, Epigraphist, Odisha State Museum, Bhubaneswar.



## Indradyumna of Mauritius

*Asit Mohanty*

The inseparable relation between Lord Jagannath and Odias surpasses geographical boundaries. Presence of Sri Jagannath along with Sri Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra in Mauritius reiterates it. Again an Odia had become the catalyst to materialise presence of Sri Jagannath in this far off island nation more than a century ago.

It is an irony that although it is accepted historical fact that this man was from Odisha, yet no one knows for sure his place of birth in Odisha. His name finds place in history of Mauritius as a social activist who also happened to be a Hindu priest. He is better known as the builder of largest Hindu temple of Mauritius in Triolet. While in Mauritius, the Odia title of his name must have shrugged off. For the Mauritian he is remembered as Pundit Sanjeewan Lal Ramsunder or as only Pundit Sanjeewan.

There remains recorded data regarding his life in Mauritius. But only sketchy information exists about his place of origin and early life in Odisha and India. Much has been written about Pundit Sanjeewan in Mauritius although he is almost unknown in his country of origin as well as in his home State Odisha. This author got glimpses of these writings because of Mr Ramroop, a citizen of Mauritius who links his ancestral history to Jajpur of Odisha.



In 2011, Prahlad Ramsaran, who has conducted researches on history and culture of Bharo-Mauritian (Hindu citizens of Mauritius having their origin in India) wrote an article named 'Pundit Sanjeewan (1844-1907): An Orthodox Hindu Priest and a Social Worker' in a major English daily of Mauritius named 'Le Mauritian'. This research based article of Mr Ramsaran was based on a Gazette of Mauritius named 'Le Vrai Progress Colonial' dated Feb 18, 1998, portions of the book 'Hindu Mauritius' by Atmaram Biswanath, Shivaratri edition of 'Ganga Talao' of 1978, Hindi book of Mr Ramsaran named 'Mauritius Ka Adi Kavya Kanan', publications in 1998 in journals like 'La Express' and 'La Cotidien' etc.



Fate had made his life resemble to King Indradyumna of Malaba who as per mythology had first built up temple of Sri Jagannath in Srikshetra Puri. Like King Indradyumna, Pundit Sanjeevan had also tried hard not to let people remember his origin and dynasty. He had therefore never let anyone document his earlier part of life in Odisha. King Indradyumna had asked for a boon from the Lord that let he have no progenies which would not let anyone to boast that his ancestors had materialised Sri Jagannath. Similarly no one remains in the clan of Pundit Sanjeevan. He was a married man but had no progenies. He had dedicated all his assets and income to the large temple he had built up at Triolet. So, no one of his clan remains to put light on his origin and ancestors. So, no one in Odisha would be able to relate themselves with this modern day Indradyumna of Mauritius.

As per the available data Pundit Sanjeevan was born in a Brahmin family of Odisha. He was born in 1844. At the age of 22 years, in 1866, he had boarded a steamer named 'Mozambique' from Calcutta on his way to Mauritius. The reason behind his decision is yet to be ascertained as he was not among the bonded labourers from India exported to Mauritius during that time. The number of co-passengers during his journey to Mauritius was 4996.

In Mauritius he was free to search for occupation as he was neither a bonded labourer nor contractual worker. He first stayed in Mahebourg and Vacoas. Later he shifted his abode to Triolet, which was a small village then. At Triolet he got employed in the public works department and monitored road building work. He left this job to take up business of real estate and construction work. But his greatest work was the huge and beautiful Shiva temple in Triolet which shines like a jewel on the face of Mauritius.

Its geographical structure makes the beautiful island nation Mauritius emerge as a human heart when one glides a floating gaze on the southern hemisphere. It may also look like the revered 'Salagram' if one takes up insightful or spiritual vision. This island is located in the Indian Ocean to the southwest of African Coast. Wavy deep green mountain ranges border its three sides. Area of this island is too small, only 2040 square kilometres. Tourists from any corner of the world who may have visited this island nation at different times of the year have without any hesitation accepted that as per natural beauty it is a fairy land.

It is located in the Indian Ocean at a height of 2000 feet from sea level. Beautiful coral reefs encircle it. The experts, who have studied the geography and geology of Mauritius, opine that long back in forgotten history island of Mauritius was created because of a devastating volcanic eruption. Although throughout the year greenery covers up the whole Mauritius, yet colour of its soil is black. Geologists say its soil is black as it is created of volcanic lava. Nature has dotted the greenery covered black soil of this island with deep blue lakes. Beauty of these lakes is splendid. At times emotion laden tourists say, Like the clear and clean waters of lakes of Mauritius, inhabitants of this island are also too cultured, gentlemanly and their spirit and behaviour is pure.



It is astonishing to note that the inhabitants living within the small 2040 square kilometre area of this small island differ from each other as per their origin. The major communities in the populace who live here are Europeans, Africans, the ones who have come from India to settle here called Bharo Mauritian and people of Chinese origin called Sino Mauritian. Bharo Mauritians are mostly Hindus. Majority of the festivals celebrated in Mauritius are of Hindu Bharo Mauritian community.

Hindu Indians are a majority in Mauritius. They constitute 49 per cent of the population as per the 2011 census, followed by 32 per cent Christians, 17 per cent Muslims and 0.4 per cent Buddhists. But human habitation in Mauritius is quite new. In 1507 the Portuguese explorers who reached the island had found no indigenous people living on the island. It was the only home of the Dodo bird, which is now extinct. This rare bird became extinct on the island after less than eighty years of its discovery by the Portuguese. The Dutch settled here in 1598 and abandoned it in 1710, Mauritius became a French colony in 1715. The British took control of Mauritius in 1810. This island nation became an independent state as a Commonwealth realm on March 12, 1968 and a republic within the Commonwealth on March 12, 1992.

Usually rainy season continues in Mauritius from January to May. During these months no major festival is celebrated in Mauritius. Rainfall decreases in April and drizzles continue till June. Climate becomes enjoyable. The best time of the year in Mauritius is from September to November. So, most of the festivals in Mauritius are celebrated during this period. Apart from them Maha Shivaratri festival is observed in February or March, festival to honour the mother goddess at different times of the year and Dipavali is celebrated in October and November.



It is noteworthy to mention here that like the festivals of India, the religious celebrations in Mauritius are also attached to faith, folklores and mythological traditions. So, there is similarity in the stories and beliefs attached to festivals like Maha Shivaratri and Dipavali that of India and Mauritius.

Origin of major temples and deities worshipped in Mauritius can be easily tracked down to India, like the temple in Triolet built by Pundit Sanjeevan. As per mythology time had made people forget that King Indradyumna had built the Sri Jagannath temple in Puri. Similarly with time people of Mauritius had also forgotten the presence of Lord Jagannath in the temple built by Pundit Sanjeevan and relation of this great man with these deities of Odisha. People of Mauritius again realised the importance of the idols of Sri Jagannath, Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra in this temple when Rath Yatra was celebrated for the first time in the history of Mauritius in 1984. This Rath Yatra celebration had preceded the astonishing miraculous rediscovery of the idols originally worshipped in Puri. It also unfolded an unknown chapter of Hindu history of Mauritius.

Few decades back a Vaishnav Sadhu named Charanambuja Prabhu, who was a disciple of the founder of ISKCON Srila Prabhupada



used to stay in Mauritius. It was the formative period of ISKCON in Mauritius. One night in 1983 he had a dream that he was moving all around Mauritius embracing an idol of Lord Jagannath.

For him this dream was puzzling. He started to ponder, why he saw this dream in Mauritius thousands kilometre away from Odisha. More he thought about his dream, he started to believe that this dream was not without a reason.

On the next morning when he woke up, he described his dream to other devotees in the temple. The head priest of the temple provided startling fact that since long three idols similar to those of Sri Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra of Puri were being worshipped in the Shiva temple or 'Shivala' in Triolet. This Shiva temple was the one built by Pundit Sanjeewan.

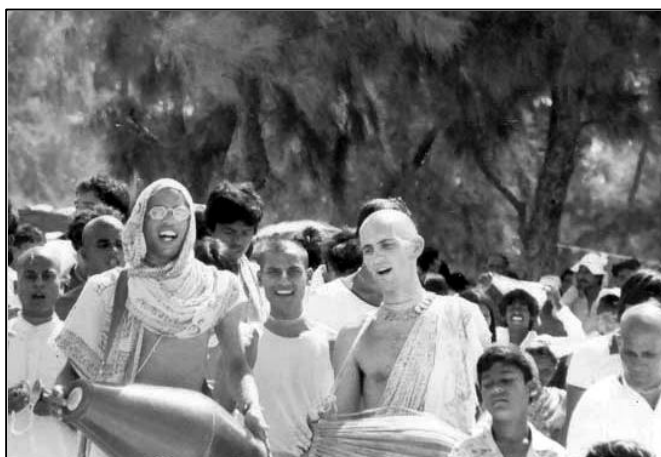
This information made heart of Sadhu Charanambuja fill up with devotional emotions. He got engulfed in eternal astonishment and joy. Along with some other devotees he took up a journey to Triolet. The 'Maheswarnath temple' in Triolet was 90 feet high and built up of concrete. It had temples for several other deities in the temple campus. In one of these subsidiary temples on the campus forgotten identity of deities of Srikshetra were discovered.

Sadhu Charambuja could immediately identify the deities similar to that of Puri reigning in the tranquility of the temple. But the colours of

the deities baffled him. These deities at Triolet did not bear the traditional colours of the original deities worshipped in Puri. They existed in separate unique colours. The deities had been coloured up in light pink. So, they did not have the black, white and yellow appearance of our well known deities. In their light pink look, they seemed different and foreign.

Sadhu Chranmbuja had come across these deities in the middle of June 1983. During this time famous Rath Yatra or car festival of Jagannath is celebrated in Puri. Preparations for

Sri Gundicha or start of Rath Yatra festivities had already started. As per the traditions and Hindu almanac Sri Gundicha is celebrated on the second day of bright fortnight (Sukla Pakhya) of Hindu month of Ashadha. A fortnight before it, Deva Snana Purnima



or the day to bath the deities is observed on full moon day (Purnima) of month of Jyestha. From that day, special rituals or 'Anabasara Niti' of the deities start. During this fortnight the deities are worshipped by a special class of servitors called Daitas and the deities are kept away from the eyes of other devotees. During this time Daitas do the traditional annual maintenance of the deities. This is called 'anabasara'. The traditional maintenance work is called 'ghana lagi'. The 'banak lagi' or traditional colouring of the deities is performed after that. The day on which the deities appear again before the devotees in the new look is called 'navayouvan darshan'. It falls on the fourteenth day of the dark fortnight



(Chaturdashi) or no moon day (Amavasya) day of Ashadha month. By the time the construction of chariots or three Rathas that had started from the day of Akshaya Tritiya gets completed. Yellow, black and green coloured chariots remain ready to carry the deities. These three chariots are prepared in the 'ratha khala' (the yard of Chariot making) in front of the palace of Gajapati king of Puri. After getting the 'agya mala' of ritualistic directive chariots are dragged in front of Singhadwara and on the day of Sri Gundicha Rathayatra festivities start.

As an active member of the ISKCON, Sadhu Charanambuja Das knew all about these rituals of Lord Jagannath. His investigation revealed that the localites were totally ignorant about these rituals as well as origin of these deities. It was obvious that the persons who were ignorant about colours of the deities had no knowledge about the rituals attached to them. Sadhu Charanambuja was worried and hurt. He discussed with the management of the 'Maheswarnath temple' in Triolet and with the cooperation of localites and devotees started preparation for the renovation of the three deities.

Their first job was repair of body of the idols and 'banak lagi' or colouring, which is done during 'anabasar' in Srikshetra Puri. No dates were fixed there for the process as per the tradition. But the way Daitas toil hard during the period to renovate the idols in Puri, they used their all efforts to remove the several coatings of colours put on the three idols at the temple. Another member of the ISKCON Sahasrakshi Dasi had also played a major role in this process.

Construction of the temple in Triolet built by Pundit Sanjeevan had started in 1888 and it was ritually consecrated in 1891. Inscription on the wall of the temple proclaimed Pundit Sanjeevan's relation with the temple. A famous

priest of Mauritius Pundit Daulatram Chaturvedi had presided over the ritualistic ceremonies attached to the consecration of the temple.

Construction of this temple also had links with the historical developments in Mauritius. Till 1880s the labourers from India had no right to own land or build up their own houses. These workers who toiled in industries and sugarcane fields were compelled to suffer in dingy industrial slums. A labour movement during that period led to change in this draconian law. These labourers got permission to own their own land and houses. This had provided chance for Pundit Sanjeevan to buy up 150 acres of land from a person named Jules Langlois. He later sold off this land to others at huge profit.

Pundit Sanjeevan utilised most of this acquired funds for the construction of the temple of his dreams in Triolet. He was a staunch devotee of Shiva. So, the temple built by him was dedicated to Lord Maheswarnath. But he could not forget the reigning deity of his ancestral origin, Sri Jagannath. So, deities of Sri Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra were also part of the temple complex.

It is for sure the deities established by Pundit Sanjeevan must have got original colours of the deities worshipped in Puri. But during almost ten decades the people who took over charge of the temple after Pundit Sanjeevan had forgotten importance of the colours of these deities. With time several coatings of different colours had been added up on the idols. The bodies of idols had got hidden behind it.

Through efforts of Sadhu Charanambuja and Sahasrakshi Dasi seven coatings of these colours were removed carefully. It was astonishing to note that different layers of colours put on the deities were not only pink; there were also different layers of hues of the rainbow. When the



original layer of colours on the idols was reached, the traditional black, white and yellow colours of the deities emerged out. At last 'banak lagi' of these idols was made using those traditional colours.

Another startling fact also came to the fore. The idols of the temple in Triolet were not made up of wood what to speak of neem wood (neem wood is used for construction of idols worshipped in Puri). White marble had been used to construct the idols at Maheswarnath temple complex. So, the members of the Temple Trust did not feel it safe to take out these idols for Rath Yatra and opposed the suggestion. It took almost a year for Sadhu Charanambuja to persuade the temple management and localites to agree for observation of Rath Yatra. It was decided to have a single large idol of Lord Jagannath constructed of wood for the Rath Yatra rituals.

Rath Yatra was celebrated at this temple in Mauritius for the first time in middle of August in 1984. 'Chhera Panhara' ritual (sweeping of chariots by the Gajapati king of Puri) was also held in this first Rath Yatra celebration of Mauritius. Amidst joyous chants, Kirtan, dance and claps the chief of management of Triolet temple conducted the 'chhera panhara' ritual. A large rally of devotees flowing in devotional emotions travelled up to the sea beach, where 'sandhya arati' of the deities was held. After that 'Sri Jagannath prasadam' was distributed among all present.

Meanwhile, the ISKCON has built up another temple dedicated to Lord Jagannath, Sri

Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra near Triolet. It has only enhanced the importance of the memory of first appearance of Sri Jagannath in Mauritius more than a century back.

It is to be noted that although Sri Jagannath temple had been established at Triolet in 1891, till 1984 Rath Yatra had been never celebrated there. Due to non-traditional colouration, there was little chance to identify their relation of these idols with the revered deities of Odisha, Sri Jagannath, Sri Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra. The exploration of this site through the dream of Sadhu Charanambuja revealed a undiscovered chapter of Indians especially that of Odisha in Mauritius. It also brought to fore a great Odia Pundit Sanjeevan. It proved that the dream of Sadhu Charanambuja was not trivial; it was a gift with deeper intentions. In other words it can be described as a wish of Almighty; whose plans and wishes get manifested through the spirit and activities of humans. This episode of human history again proved that Almighty never lets selfless devotion of people like Pundit Sanjeevan to be forgotten although the man himself tries for it. It had happened with King Indradyumna and it has got repeated in case of this great Odia ancestor of ours.

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## Antiquity of Puri City

*Dr. Bhaskar Mishra*

Puri, the seat of Lord Shri Jagannatha, otherwise known as the Purusottam Kshetra or Shriksheeta is an important centre of Hindu pilgrimage in India. Like Badrinath, Kedarnath, Amarnath, Rameswaram and Tirupati, it is a large sanctuary which is the main centre for pilgrimage in the sub-continent and it has been accepted as an all south Asian shrine by James J. Preston. From the early period (at least from the Gupta Age) till the present time, Jagannatha Puri became a full grown *kshetra* for the Hindus with considerable political and social support.

The sacred city of Puri, in the Indian province of Odisha, is best known throughout the world for its great temple of Lord Shri Jagannatha. The extraordinary sanctity of this *Kshetra* is reflected in the Puranas and other religious texts in India. The Vishnu Purana mentions Purusottama as the abode of Vishnu, while the Vamana Purana refers to the Supreme Purusottam in connection with Tirtha Yatra of Prahallad. It is also known as *Sankha Kshetra* described in Utkal Khanda of Skanda Purana. This sacred tract is said to resemble in shape a conch-shell, Sankha, which is one of the four *ayudhas* of Vishnu, others being *chakra* (discus), *gada* (mace) and *Padma* (lotus). Puri is known as Sankhakshetra and Bhubaneswar, Jajpur and Konark are respectively

called Chakrakshetra, Gadakshetra and Padmakshetra.

Puri is the modern name of this Puranic holy city. Puranas and other old Sanskrit texts refer to it by various names viz., Nilachal, Nilagiri, Niladri, Purusottama, Purusottam Kshetra, Sriksheeta, Purusottam Puri, Jagannatha Kshetra etc. Of these names Purusottama and Sriksheeta were most popular. In the Odia inscriptions of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century A.D., it is called Purusottama Kataka. The Ain-i-Akbari describes it as the city of Purusottama. To the pilgrims of other parts of India it is generally known as the Jagannatha Dham. The earliest English visitor, William Bruton, who came here in 1633, called it 'the great city of Jaggarnat' being called after their great Jaggarnat'. In the early years of the British rule, in the Government records, Puri has been described as the city of Jagannatha and the district was also given the same name. Andrew Stirling in his 'Account of Orissa' published in 1824, uses both Jagannatha-Poree and simply Pooree. Few places in India can vie with Puri in religious sanctity, cultural greatness and continuity. The antiquity of this holy city goes to remote past. According to Cunningham the ancient name of the town was Charitra. In the drama of *anargharaghava*, we find the word Purusottam used for this place. In the Nagari plate of Anangabhimha III of 1229-30



A.D., the town is referred as Purusottam Kshetra. This name has been used by Muslims and Marhattas as Purusottam Chhatar or simply as 'Chhatar' in their official records. According to the Sanskrit Scriptures, the Kshetra extends from the temple of Loknath on the west to Vilveswar on the east and from the sea to the Mitiani, the small rivulet.

Puri is situated (lat. 19° 47' 55" N. long 85° 49' 5" E.) on the shores of the Bay of Bengal known as 'Mahodadhi'. The blue sea gives the town a picturesque appearance. The town is bounded on the south by the sea; on the west by Mauza Sipasarubali (No.1); on the north by Gopinathpur and on the east by Mauza Balukhand. The area represented by the sandy shore on which stand most of the Government buildings is known in official records under the name Khasmahal Balukhand and is popularly known as Balukhand, (the sandy portion). Puri is connected both by roads and railway prior to the British conquest in 1803 A.D. There was no road in the real sense of the term, besides a few fair-weather cart-tracts without bridges and without proper ferry arrangements for crossing the river. The traffic from the south to Cuttack passed along the eastern shore of the Chilika Lake between it and the Sea; to Puri and hence followed exactly the line of the present Jagannath Road. It passed through Khurda along the Ganjam road, the old route being abandoned to Nulias and antelopes. Another road from Puri passed through Khurda and the Barmul pass in to the Central provinces via Sambalpur until 1804-1805 that this line was adopted. The former route was through the States of Nilagiri and Mayurbhanj. It passed in many places through dense forests full of wild animals and dacoits.

The construction of Jagannath road was taken up in 1811, but it was not completed until

1826 A.D. The greater part of the earth work between Cuttack and Puri was completed in 1813, but it did not become negotiable until 1817. Late Maharaja Sukhmoy Ray of Calcutta contributed a sum of one lakh and half for the benefit of the Bengali pilgrims visiting the temple of Jagannatha. Sarais, shelter houses were built at Bhadrak, Akhuapada, Balasore, Basta and Rajghat to accommodate pilgrims.

By railway and road, it is 63 km and 60km respectively from Bhubaneswar, the Capital city of Odisha. The city was administratively recognised since 1828.

The population of Puri in 1901 was 19,334. According to the census of 1971, the population of the town was 72,674 with 14,519 number of households and stands in 2008 it about 2 lakhs. In 1881 the Puri Municipality was formed with the streets as Harachandi Sahi, Bali Sahi, Kalikadevi Sahi, Dolamandap Sahi, Kundheibenta Sahi Markandeswar Sahi, Baseli Sahi, Gourbada Sahi, Chudanga Sahi, Dandimala Sahi, Matimandap Sahi, Daitapada Sahi and Kumbharapada Sahi. The area of the Municipality is 16.84 sq km.

Puri gradually gained the reputation of a health resort because of its fresh sea breeze and cooling temperature. Many residential buildings of well-to-do people, Guest Houses, Lodging Houses, hotels and restaurants have been constructed along the Sea-shore. Prominent in the centre of Balukhand and close to the sea stands the Raj Bhavan, built in 1913 for the summer residence of the Governors.

More than four hundred of hotels, lodges, Dharmasalas and Holiday Homes are available for the accommodation of the pilgrims / tourists. Puri, today, presents a multi faceted profile, the



old city teeming with market places and fine old Temples which still bear the historic imprint of its finely woven culture. Equally impressive is the sea-shore at least 7 km long with its verdant, exquisitely laid marine drive and streamlined modern beach resorts.

### General Information about Puri :

|                |                      |
|----------------|----------------------|
| Area           | - 16 sq. km (city)   |
| Altitude       | - sea level          |
| Population     | - 1,60,000 (2001)    |
| Temperature    | - Summer Max-39.90 C |
| Min            | - 20.0 C             |
| Winter Max/Min | - 17.10 C            |
| Rainfall       | - 135.23cm           |

Language Spoken - Odia, Hindi, Bengali and English.

Clothing - Light cotton in Summer and light woollen in winter.

Peak Season - During Rath Yatra (June-July) Shrikshetra or Puri boasts as a famous place of pilgrimage since hoary antiquity. The sea known as 'Mahodadhi' is one of its five main Tirthas. The sanctity and historicity of the place together with its ideal healthy environment have been a suitable resort through ages for the pilgrims and tourists alike.

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## The Antiquities of Sri Purusottama Kshetra

*Jayanti Mishra*

The sacred place of Sri Jagannath, the Lord of the Universe is known as various names- Puri, Nilachala, Purusottama, Sreekshetra, Sankhakshetra, Sankhanavi Mandal, Abikarpatana etc. In ancient time Lord Jagannath was worshipped as Purusottama. So in different Purans the greatness of Lord Jagannath and his holy city Purusottama Kshetra are described beautifully. According to Padma Puran it is stated that the Purusottama Kshetra is situated on the north shore of the sea and south of the river Mahanadi. In Brahma Puran it is described that the length and breadth of this Kshetra is ten jojana (nearly 80 miles) and five jojana (nearly 40 miles) respectively.

If we intend to trace the time of the Purusottamakshetra, we will have to go through the Pujaripali inscription of Gopal Dev (last part of 11th century) in which we find the name of this sacred Kshetra. Besides this, our attention is drawn to the hints of the eastern sea and the Purusottama Kshetra in the inscription of Nagapur of 1104 A.D.

Before these two inscriptions we also get some information on this Kshetra in the drama of Anargharaghab of Murari Mishra. As per Skanda Puran we come to know that the sacred image of Lord Jagannath has been made of the log of wood

floating on the ocean. We can also find this type of interpretation in the Atharva Veda and Rg Veda. But this idea is not so clear by which we can put the time of Lord Purusottama as the time of Rg Veda.

On the whole we may interpret the time of Purusottama Kshetra is not earlier than the Puranic Age. In different Purans we find the detailed description of this sacred Kshetra. In Matsya Puran we find the name of Purusottama twice- in the description of "Bimalapitha" and in different sacred Hindu Tirthas. There we also find a description of Mourjya kings and their successors in this Puran. So as per this description we can easily interpret the time of this Puran is not earlier than the Mourjya period. According to Pergitar Saheb the time of the Matsya Puran is the last part of 3rd century A.D. According to Dr. Raghaban, the place of this Puran is nearly Narmada province. So from this interpretation we can assume that the famous publicity of Purusottama Kshetra has been spread over Narmada province for which the author of Matsya Puran able to give an information of this Purusottama Kshetra.

And also Pergitar Saheb described in Bishnu Puran that there is information of "Uddradesha" and "Puri town" instead of



“Andhra” and “Champa nagar” respectively. He also assumed the time of the Bishnu Puran is not earlier than the last part of 4th century A.D.

After thorough study of Brahma Puran, Wilson described that the worship of Sri Krishna as Lord Jagannath has been found in 13th or 14th century A.D. In the journal of Aryabartta there is an interpretation of the greatness of Sri Jagannath Kshetra in the book Tantra Jamal and Rudra Jamal. In “Uttartantra” of Rudra Jamal when we find Bhairab and Bhairabi discussion, there is some information of Lord Jagannath. Not only in Rudra Jamal but also in Tantra Jamal it is stated that Purusottama is the heaven of the world.

Though these two tantric texts are modern it is sure and authentic that it was written earlier than the Kurma Puran, because we find the references of these two Tantra texts in the Kurma Puran. Some scholars discussed the time of Kurma Puran is 4th century A.D. or much earlier than that. As per these descriptions of Purusottama and Lord Jagannath we can directly

say that there must be a historical value of these two Tantric texts like Rudra Jamal and Tantra Jamal. But according to Manmohan Chakrabarti Skanda, Brahma and Siva Puran had been written after 10th century A.D. Depending on this we cannot be able to trace out the time of the sacred “Purusottama Kshetra”.

So considering the subject matter and facts described in the above Purans and Tantric texts we can easily trace the time of the holy “Purusottama Kshetra” as earlier as 3rd century A.D.

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## The Temple of Markandeswar of Puri

*Dr. Srinivas Acharya*

### **Introduction :**

The temple of Markandeswar is one of the important Saiva shrines of Puri. The name Markandeswar is connected with the name of Markandeya, a great devotee of Shiva. Iswar or Shiva is worshipped by Markandeya is called Markandeswar. It is one of the earliest Shaiva shrines located in Srikshetra. The great sage Markandeya is the founder of the shrine. In Narasingha Puran the legend of Markandeya is stated in a nice manner. Markandeya or Markanda was the son of Mrukandu and Manaswini. Mrukandu did not have sons for a long time. So he performed penance for several years to please Shiva to get a son. Shiva granted a son who would live up to sixteen years. Even from boyhood Markandeya knew all the Shastras. His pleasing manners got the approval of his teachers and the boy was liked by one and all. But the parents were sad and whenever they looked at their son a gloom spread over their face. The secret of the short span of life was hidden from him. The 16th year was fast approaching and one day unable to control their grief they wept before him. Markandeya asked the reason why they wept. Father Mrukandu with tears running down his cheeks told him the story. From that day onwards Markandeya started performing penance. The boy was soon engrossed in severe



austerities. The day of his death came and the boy sat before Shiva in his form of Linga Shakti in deep meditation. The messengers of Yama, the God of death could not approach Markandeya for the radiation from him was too hot for them. They were unable to take away the life of Markandeya. Finally Yama himself came to fetch him. Then Markandeya crying loudly for help embraced the idol before him. Yama threw his rope in a loop and it went circled round the idol also. Angry Shiva rose from the idol and coming down killed Yama to save the child. From that day onwards Shiva got the names Mrityunjay and Kala-kala. After that at the request of Devas Shiva gave back life to Yama again on the condition that



the young Markandeya would live forever. Thus he made Markandeya to be of 16 years for ever. The Puranas state that after getting the blessing of Shiva, Markandeya lived for ten crores of years.

### **Markandeswar Temple:**

Markandeswar Temple is situated about a distance of half a kilometer to the North West of Sri Jagannath Temple complex. The locality is called Markandeswar Sahi in which the temple stands for year. The exact geographical location of the temple is longitude 85°49'94" E and latitude 19°48'62"N.

The original temple here is dated back pre - Ramayana times because in the Ramayana we find the sage Markandeya as one of the Dharma Shastries in the court of King Dasarath. The present temple is erected in much deeper ground level. Most of the scholars accept that the present structure of Markandeswar Temple was constructed during the Somavanshi period of Odishan history. Pt. Kripasindhu Mishra the author of Utkal Itihas has stated that Markandeswar Temple and stairs to the tank were built by Koshala Keshari. Eminent scholar Jagabandhu Singh in his book Prachina Utkala has also mentioned that Markandeswar Temple was constructed by Koshala Keshari (Shakabda 761-785 or 740-764 AD). Madalapanji also supports the above statement. According to the opinions of the learned historian Dr.S.N.Rajaguru "Markandeswar Temple seems to be the earliest centre of Shaivacharyas in Srikshetra or Puri. The Saiva teachers of Chodaganga Deva and his family lived in that ancient temple which might have been constructed by a Sailodbhava King of Kangoda in about 7th or 8th Century AD". Prof. H.V. Stietencron has pointed out that there is some resemblance in architectural style between Markandeswar Temple and Mukteswar Temple of Bhubaneswar which belongs to 10th Century

AD. The both temples must have belonged to Somavanshi rule in Odishan History.

### **Importance of Markandeswar Temple:**

There are four prominent Ashrams or hermitages in Srikshetra connected with Srimandir rituals and Markandeyashram is one of them. The other three Ashrams are Bhruquashram, Angirashram and Kanduashram. There are five prominent Shaiva shrines known together as Panchapandavas or five brothers namely "Yameswar, Lokanath, Markandeswar, Kapalmochan and Nilakantha. Markandeswar is locally called Bhim & Arjun. It is known from the Mahabharat that five Pandav brothers during their *tirthayatra* in Vanaparva visited Yajnavedi and performed religious rites there. It is said that five Shaiva shrines were attached to memorise their arrival at Puri. There is reference in Skanda Purana Purusottama Mahatmya that this kshetra is called Shankhakshetra as it is conch shaped and at the centre stands the temple of Sri Jagannath. It is surrounded and protected by eight shrines called Astashambhus. Markandeswar is one of them. The others are Kapalmochan, Kshetrapal, Yameswar, Ishaneswar, Bilweswar and Nilakantha. As per the reference in Brahamapuran, the sage Markandeya founded this Shaiva shrines in Vishnukshetra in order to close the rivalry between Shaivas and Vaishnavas. Sri Jagannath directed Sudarshanchakra to dig a pond for Markandeya. That pond was named after Markandeya and became the Adyatirtha among the Panchatirthas viz. Markandeya tank, Swetaganga, Rohinikunda, Mahodadhi and Indradyumna tank.

### **Description of the temple:**

According to Vastushastra the temple of Markandeswar belongs to Triratha class, Rekha order and its height is about sixty feet from the ground level. The temple is about twenty feet below the present road level. The whole structure



consists of three divisions such as Vimana, Jagamohan & Natamandap.

The structure of Vimana or main temple is facing towards east and the presiding deity is Mrityunjay Sivalinga, the temple is built in both sand stones and laterite stones which is thickly plastered with lime mortar so the decorative ornamentations are not visible outside. There are *parsvadevata* images of Ganesh & Karttikeya in the outer parts of Vimana. The sanctum preserves the Mrityunjay Lingashakti at its centre and Sivalinga is in cracked condition due to sudden appearance of Siva from Linga to save his devotee Markandeya from Yama's attack. The same incident has been depicted with a painting in one portion of inner wall. The other portion bears the picture of Sri Jagannath in his four shapes. In the front side wall the picture of Shiva in the stage of meditation is drawn in colours. The top portion of the Vimana or main temple consists of beki, Amalakasila, Khapuri, Kalasa, Chakra and Dhawaja. Dopicha lions and other figures are fixed which serve as the supporting elements of amalakasila.

The Jagamohan of the temple is a Pidha-Deula and its height is about 40 feet from the ground level of the premises. In the corner of the inner part of Jagamohan the Ishna is placed. In one side of the inner wall of Jagamohan is depicted with a painting of Rishipanchami rites in which goddess Laxmi uses to listen canons of Rishipanchami Brata from the sage Markandeya. The Jagamohan is occupied by a small stone slab which contains the legendary images of Markandeya, Mrityunjay Shiva and Yama.

In side of Natamandap the big wooden bull, the traditional mount of Markandeswar and Parvati is kept to be used on the occasion of their marriage ceremony. On the other side the wooden Vimana is placed which is used in carrying the deity for participation in Chandana Yatra.

Goddess Parvati is housed in a small temple. The upper part of the inner wall of the said temple is depicted with Dasamahabidya Viz. Kali, Tara, Sodashi, Bhubaneswari, Bhairabi, Chhinnamasta, Dhumavati, Bagala, Matangi, Kamala or Raj Rajeswari. On the southern side of Jagamohan there is a Kitchen or Roshaghara and a well in front of the kitchen. There are two small temples in the premises known as Panchapandav temple and temple of Baidyanatha and Rameswar. Outside wall of the main temple contains a rare image of cat - faced Hanuman or a Marjar Hanuman, in the Valmiki Ramayan (Sundarakanda - 2nd Canto) it is stated that Hanuman entered in Ravan's harem to trace Sita in form of a cat.

In front of the main gate way entrance there is a platform called Gamha-vedi. It is connected with festive occasion of Gamhapurnima and Balabhadra Janma. By the side of Gamhavedi there is a temple of Saptamatrukas or Seven sacred mothers. In the temple the seven stone images each about four feet high kept over a platform. The seven mothers are Brahmi or Brahmani, Maheswari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Indrani and Chamunda. They are accompanied by images of Ganesh and Birabhadra Shiva. Each mother except Chamunda has her child in her lap. The temple of Sapta Matruka is one of the important Shakta shrines of Odisha. Images of Sri Jagannath, Sri Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and other deities are worshipped in a separate temple. In front of Sri Jagannath temple there is the Kaliyadalan Mandap or Boitideula. Its upper part is designed as a boat which is a rare structure in Puri. It was built by Kirtichandra, the King of Barddhaman in West Bengal in 1746 AD. By the side of Kaliyadalan Mandap there is a Dolamandap. The small temple of Dhableswar is in front of Dolamandap. On the auspicious day of Bataosha observed on the 14th day of the



bright fortnight of Kartika devotees in large numbers come to worship the deity.

### **Markandeswar Tank:**

The temple of Markandeswar is connected with Markandeswar tank in its rituals and festivals. It is the first and one of the five sacred *tirthas* or bathing places of the pilgrims in Srikshetra. The other four *tirthas* are Swetaganga Tank, Rohini Kunda, Idradyumna Tank and Mahodadhi (Ocean). Markandeya Tank is an open structure which is enclosed within stone walls made of laterite blocks. The tank is irregular in shape and 8.5 meters below the present road level. Its sides measure 106.68 m. (350 Ft) on the northern side, 154.8385 m. (508 Ft) on the eastern side, 117.348 m. (385 Ft) in the southern side and 165.2026 m. (542 Ft) on the western side. The tank covers an area of nearly 1.6187 hectares (4.598 Acres).

It is situated in the mauza Markandeswar Sahi, Khata 668 at Plot No.136. Generally the southern side of the tank is used as the bathing Ghat by tourist & pilgrims. The tank is presently used for rituals as well as normal bathing. Rituals like obsequies, Pindadana, Tarpan and Mundana Kriya are observed at the steps of the tank. The tank is fed by natural springs from underground. Both inlet and outlet of the tank are found which serve to keep the water of the tank clean. An inlet channel in west side is found in dilapidated condition. The speciality of the tank is that there is a sacrificial altar at the centre of the tank.

### **Festivals & Rituals :**

The festival of Ashokashtami is observed on the 8th day of bright fortnight of Chaitra (April) in the temple with great enthusiasm. Mahasivaratri in the month of Phalguna (March) and the marriage ceremony on the eve of Sheetalashasthi in the month of Jyestha (June) are celebrated here in pomp and ceremony. Markandeswar participates in Chandan Yatra at Narendra Tank

in the month of Balsakham (May) with Yameswar, Lokanath, Kapalmochan, Nilakantha, Rama and Krishna in a colourful boat. Sri Sudarshan from Srimandir arrives at Gamha Bedi on the full moon day of Shravana (August) to perform birth rites of Sri Balabhadra. Kaliadalan festival is observed in the month of Bhadraba (September). On this occasion Madanamohan, Rama and Krishna arrive at Kaliyadalan Mandap from Srimandir. Besides these special rites are performed in the temple in consonance with the rites in Sri Jagannath temple on five occasions namely Ashrama-bije, Kamada-ekadashi, Shravan-shuklanavami, Rishipanchami and Margasira Shukla Chaturdashi. Traditional sandy Linga worshipped by Neta girls belong to servitor group of Srimandir has special attraction in the shrine. At that time Neta girls with their attractive dress and gold ornaments look like Odissi dancers. The girls used to sing prayers addressed to Markandeswar, Shiva & Parvati, Sarvamangala etc.

### **Inscription :**

Four ancient stone inscriptions are found in the Markandeswar temple premises which are of great interest to historians. Out of them two stone inscriptions pertain to the Ganga dynasty. All the four inscriptions have been edited by Dr. S.N. Rajaguru in the volume I & II entitled "Inscriptions of the temples of Puri and origin of Sri Purusottam Jagannath published by Sri Jagannath Sanskrit Visvavidyalaya, Puri.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Markandeswar temple inscription was edited by Dr. D.C Sircar and Dr. S.N Rajaguru tried to rectify some of errors in his reading. Its language is Sanskritised Odia and the script belongs to North-east Indian Kutilalipi. Its length & width are 31" and 12" respectively. The inscription states that in the 57th auspicious and victorious reign of Chodagangadev, a perpetual lamp to burn before Markandeswar (excluding)



a half of Nirolagram belonged to Purusottam, (the other half is donated) to its resident who accepted the Eka-Chhaya. The service charter was made under the witness of Mudrahasta Devadhara, Nilakantha Pushpalak and Sevaka Narayana Somajaji.

The 2nd inscription is written in Sanskrit language in North Indian script. The text covers five lines having measurement of 14 ½" x 8". The present inscription states that in Magha and the bright fortnight of sixth *tithi* and in holy Friday, his brother Veera – Pramadiraja granted some property to the Saivacharyas in the temple of Markandeswar. Pramadiraja is the younger brother of Chodagangadev and his brother was associated with and appeared in battles of Utkal and Bangi in between 1112 & 1152 A.D., for long 40 years.

The 3rd is Panchapandav temple inscription which is written in mixed script of Devanagari and Bengali. The inscription is not clear but from three lines it is known that this small temple was built by Nanaji, the Maratha chief and his minister Munjaji who appointed to masons named Sutradhar Sagaranga & Bhimandas. The temple was constructed when Puri was under Maratha rule from 1751 to 1803 AD.

The 4th inscription is Kaliyadalanmandap or Boitideula inscription which is five lined and written in Odia script and Sanskrit language. Its time is 1667 Sakabda or 1745 AD. The inscription states that King Harekrushna Singh cleaned the Markandeswar Tank and constructed steps to the tank. He built the Mandap and called himself Keertichandra.

### Conclusion :

There are three famous Markandeswar Temples in India and Markandeswar temple of Puri is one of them. The other two temples are in Karnatak state. The Markandeswar temple of Kaloor in Manvi taluk, Raichur district, Karnatak

is surrounded on all sides by granite hills which are full of antiquities. The temple noted for its beautifully carved pillars is the prominent attraction. The other Markandeswar temple is a very old place with natural beauty. It is a good tourist spot in the district of Gadchiroli, popularly known as Kashi of Vidarbha. As per the description of the Brahmapurana, Skandapurana, Bamadeva Samhita and Niladrimahodaya etc. Markandeswar temple of Puri is connected with tank is very important from the cultural, religious, historical and architectural point of view. The same temple is supposed to be the place where the young Markandeya worshipped Shiva in order to win over his destiny. This is where Shiva fought with Yama and blessed Markandeya. The temple of Yameswar in Puri is the place where Yama worshipped Shiva and built a temple there. Srikshetra is the place where Markandeya saw Balamukunda. As a Shaiva shrines its importance is equal to Yameswar and Lokanath temple. The available sculptures in the temple premises indicate that they were made in different periods of administrations. The temple and tank are closely connected with some of the rituals of Srimandira. Markandeswar tank is 1st amongst five holy *tirthas* of Srikshetra.

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## The Divine as Feral in Salabega's Song "Bagha Matilare"

Dr. Bibhudutt Dash

Of the different incarnations of Vishnu, in some, as in the Matsya Avatar, Kurma Avatar, Varaha Avatar, and Narasingha Avatar, God has assumed non-human forms. In the Narasingha Avatar, the merciful Lord has appeared in an extremely furious form. He has also assumed a mixture of different forms in the Navagunjara *rupa*. In so far as the necessity of incarnations is concerned, God decides to manifest in His chosen form, be it human or non-human. And such manifestation is a historical necessity. As Sri Krishna says in *Gita*, "Arjuna, whenever righteousness is on the decline, the unrighteousness is in the ascendant, then I body Myself forth. For the protection of the virtuous, for the extirpation of evil-doers, and for establishing Dharma (righteousness) on a firm footing, I am born from age to age (Chapter IV. 7-8).

In literature and art, God is at times portrayed as non-human. Such portrayal may be due to the faculty of imagination of the artist. In English literature, for instance, we find such pictures of God as appearing in the form of a swan in Yeats's poem "Leda and the Swan," and in T.S. Eliot's poem "Gerontion," we find the line, "In the juvencence of the year / Came Christ the tiger." In the case of such portrayal based on mythological facts, imagination plays a little role. But if it is a case of pure imagination, it is interesting

to see how the artist describes. A supreme example of this imagination is Salabega's song "Bagha matilare." This paper focuses on Salabega's description of Sri Krishna as a tiger, bedazzling in the Nikunja *vana* with His might and briskness. The word 'feral' connotes a state of being wild.

At the outset, the poet creates an atmosphere of awe that arises out of the fact that a tiger is prowling in the Nikunja *vana*, the sylvan arboreal grove where Krishna engages in divine *lila* with Radha. This feral introduction to the song is buttressed by further depictions of the tiger's wildness. In the first two lines, Salabega writes,

*Bagha matilare Nikunja vanara  
Birahi hoichhi bagha na pai aadhara go.*

The three critically important words "matilare," "birahi," and "aadhara" heighten the intensity of the fear that supercharges the atmosphere. "Matilare" refers to an uncontrollable state of the tiger along with an evocation of fury. What is interesting to see is the collocation of the other two words that betrays the poet's withholding of suspense. While "aadhara" (food) suggests a picture of hunger, or the need to have food, "birahi" (lovesick) suggests a searing loneliness that is existential or ontological. These words may not usually collocate except in subtle



cases. And this happens here. In the first two lines of the song, Salabega, unwittingly though, leads us to believe that he is *not* writing about a tiger!

Salabega's description of the exploits of the tiger is very graphic and beautiful. What is intriguing is Salabega's simultaneous description of the tiger as tender and violent. The poet tells that a tiger has unleashed terror near river Yamuna and it immediately pounces on its prey and takes it to the nikunja (grove). It is fascinating to see the expression, "Kakha karinei bagha nikunje pasai go". "Kakha" in Odia means armpit, and to take one, especially a child, to one's armpit is a gesture of affection. We see this in the case of a mother taking her child to her armpit. But a similar gesture from a tiger might seem suspect. What Salabega intends to highlight is the playfulness of the tiger. Since this tiger is "chhualia" that is, very tender, the poet underscores its innocence rather than its violence:

*Bagha goti chhualia bata jagithai go  
Gopastiri dekhile se deina pasai go.*

Salabega mystifies the reader as to the reality of the tiger who, far from displaying properties common to tigers, manifests celestial, divine characteristics. But when the poet pairs contrasting pictures of beauty and terror in respect of the tiger, the reader is again flabbergasted.

Salabega describes the beauty of the tiger with great aestheticism, but this aestheticism makes tacit references to something other than the tiger. He describes its lips, body, forehead, and eyes:

*Adhara sundar bagha dehajaka kala go  
Kapole chandan bindu akhi chakadola go.*

Precisely, at this point, Salabega reveals that he is not talking about an ordinary tiger since, as we see, the attributes referred to the tiger in question are hardly seen in any tiger. Although at the end of the song, the poet reveals the name of

the tiger, we still understand beforehand to whom he is referring to.

The expressions that particularly unravel the mystery are "chandan bindu" and "chakadola." In "Bagha Matilare," the poet is, in reality, singing of the beauty of Krishna. The word "Chakadola" makes reference to Lord Jagannath. In another song, Salabega has addressed Jagannath as "Kala hati" (black elephant) and chakadola: Kala hati kala-srimukha, / kalajaka daki na gala dukha / taba nama karina mala / tarijibi he chakadola."

In "Bagha matilare," Salabega's wondrous discovery of such a tiger named Kanhai mesmerizing by its ineffable beauty and gracefulness is expressed in the last lines of the song:

*Kahun e aila bagha dekhila ta nahin go  
Kahe Salabega bagha namati Kanhai go.*

The poet's exclamation as to the appearance of this tiger is no expression of wonder. Since he knows who the tiger is, it is no revelation either. This song is a paean to the glory of God. Salabega compares Kanhai (Krishna) with a tiger, and the alternating descriptions of the tiger's innocence and fury fill the atmosphere with suspense. What is interesting is that the poet goes on giving clues as to the reality of the tiger. Throughout the song, the poet describes the divine *lila* of the Lord.

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## Eulogising the Grandness of Lord Jagannath by Saints and Poets Through Ages

*Tarakanta Mohanty*

Lord Jagannath, the Lord of the Universe is the most adorable and revered God for all faiths in Odisha, India and abroad. All the main five deities of Hinduism have been merged in Him. He is represented as a Supreme Lord to Saivites, Shaktas, Ganapatyas, Saurasas and Vaishnavas. Vajpeyi Vidyakara Mishra, the famous Sanskrit Odia writer prays to Lord Jagannath as follows :

"Pranipatya Jagannatham Charachara Gurum Harim Markandaya toha tustwa bhoga peryanakasayinam (Nityachara Paddhati)" Indravuti, the then king, Udiyana (Odisha) who founded Bajrayana system of Buddhism has invoked in his Jnanasiddhi as Jagannath. "Pranipatya Jagannatham Sarvajana vava chitam sarva Buddhamayam Siddhivipinam Gaganopaman." Puri the abode of Lord Jagannath has been frequented by saints and seers and the poets who have sung and composed on Lord Jagannath. Those are rhetoric and sensuals and of high vocabulary. The poets of Odisha have exhausted their pens and panegyric writing on Lord Jagannath, the Lord of the Universe. Thus poets and writers of Odisha have used their facile pen under the illuminating influence of Lord Jagannath for more than a thousand years past.

Not Adisankaracharya but Adisankaracharya's disciple in the end of 8th century A.D. paid a visit to Puri and after beholding Lord Jagannath he was overwhelmed and swayed by emotion he recalled the Krishnalila and instantly sung 'Kadachit Kalindi tata bipine' which is popularly known as Jagannathastakam. Once you appeared in the woods on the banks of Kalindi. Oh Lord, the master of the universe, appear in my vision'.

The great Vaishnava poet Jayadev of 13th century Orissa, certainly did not complete his matchless lyrics in the 'Gitagovinda' to please any earthly potentate but to please Jagannath who is considered nothing but Krishna. Jayadev was the poet in the temple of Lord Jagannath. Most probably his great book 'Gita Govinda' was composed according to a plan for dancisation of the sublime Krishnapadam before Jagannath. The reincarnated Krishna and Jayadeva's songs have become part of the daily rituals of the temple of Jagannath. The songs composed during British and pre-British period are nothing but the lovely offshots in vernacular of those divine love and lyrics of Jayadev in Sanskrit. Poet Jayadev's 'Dasavatara Stotam' is a magnum opus of his creation.



The mediaeval saint Kabir of the sixteenth century India is a secular saint who had endeavoured throughout his lifetime to bring harmony between Hindus and Muslims is also popularly known as a saint of 'Ram-Rahim' cult. On beholding Lord Jagannath he had sung 'Kabse chhodi Mathurapuri kabse chhodi Kasi ab ho geya tu Jhadkhanda ki basi'. Since when you left Dwarka Mathurapuri and Kashi now you are the inhabitant of Jhadkhanda. He has sung many more poems on Lord Jagannath.

Not only Santha Kabir paid a visit to Puri, but after him saint Tulsi Das, Guru Nanaka, Lord Chaitanya, Shankar Dev of Assam, Ramanujacharya, Nimbarkacharya, Madhabacharya and Ballavacharya from south had a visit to Srimandir.

In the sixteenth century Nanak paid a visit to Odisha. When in the evening prayer in Srimandir, he sang the dish of Your light is as bright and due to your grace I see light and the world will be plunged into darkness if You do not exist.

Sri Chaitanya had seen Lord Krishna in Lord Jagannath, therefore he had submitted - unconditional love to Lord Jagannath. His prayer is as such : Na dhanam, na janam, sundari, kabita ba Jagadish kamaye, mama janmani janma disware Ahetuki Jagadish kamaye.

Meaning : "I do not want wealth, I do not want to become a Pandit rather I pay my unconditional love to you."

The first Odia woman writer Madhavi Dashi, contemporary of Sri Chaitanya wrote 'Gajapati Janana' in the 16th century.

Sarala Das, the earlier Odia poet so far known referred to Jagannath in several

places of his work, the Mahabharat which had the largest circulation in Odisha. The 'Vilanka Ramayana' and Chandi Purana of the same poet contain prayer to Jagannath in the beginning of each work. Sarala Das though primarily a Sakta had the greatest respect for Jagannath the presiding deity of Odisha which testifies by hundred of respectful references to his glory and greatness in his works. The works of Sarala Das which are still very popular in Odisha contributed a lot to the popularisation of devotion to Jagannath in this land during the last five centuries.

During his period there existed two schools of devotion, Orissan School of Vaisnavism and the Goudiyavaisnavism. In Odia poetical work, the Rasakollala Jagannath has been described as 'Avataree', the father of all incarnations. At the end, he clearly states that he could accomplish the task of completing Kabya Rasakollala only due to the grace of Lord Jagannath.

His prayer to Lord is magnificent. 'Jaya Jagabandhu he Jadu Nandana, Brajabali hrudata chandana, meaning Oh scion of Jadu, He is the sandal paste to the heart shore of Radha. Similarly Jagabandhu Parijane samanta nahin nahita, meaning 'there is no such feudal Lord like Jagannath.

No systematic devotional songs were written prior to sixteenth century. With the advent of Pancha Sakha, Jagannath Das, Achyutananda Das, Balaram Das, Yashwanta Das and Ananta Das. devotional songs were written. The Panchasakhas have offered prayers to Lord Jagannath in several of their works.

Devotional songs to Jagannath are found in many other important literary works. Mention may be made in this connection of



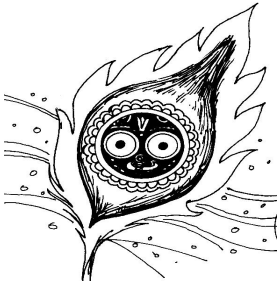
Lilavati by Raghunath Raja Harichandan, Kanchi Kaveri by Purusottam Das, Rasavinod by Dinakrushna Das-II, Anangarekha Ichhabati and Raghunath Vilas by Raja Dhananjaya Bhanja.

Achyutananda Das, who too was a prolific writer has respectfully referred to Jagannath in his several works of which Harivamsa was most important and popular.

Lastly, we can conclude by mentioning that, this mysterious God is eulogised not only by Hindu pantheon but also by different religious sects through ages.

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## 'Jagar-nout' You are Not

*Prof. Rajat Kumar Kar*

Gigantic size evoked titanic horror for foreigners  
they called you 'Jager-nout' - the chariot  
out to crush

Visitors coming on its way.

Oh ! my Lord ! How tragic it is  
they could not gauge your depth  
they could not go beyond the shore.

High waves threatened them  
the shallow is rough, it is calm beyond  
they could not comprehend.

Afraid and alarmed  
wrong message they spread  
but you remained unperturbed.

Vast you are very same as the sea  
Your expanded self  
standing at the shore  
undeterred by the sound of furious waves.

He, who sees the calm sea afar,  
gets you

the breeze over the calm bay  
makes the body cool  
takes his stress away.

Symbol of ultimate source !  
closing my eyes before You  
I neither see You calm or furious  
I am lost in Your vast expansive existence.

Jager-nout you are not  
between soul and source  
you are the knot  
In deep meditation  
on Your ever vigilant eye  
You are pursued my Lord  
and ultimately caught.

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## The Evolution and Philosophy of Tantric-Buddhism

*Pandit Antaryami Mishra*

Buddhism is a religion of peace, kindness, humanity and equality, which took birth in India during 6th century B.C. This religion became popular as it threw open the doors of organized religious life to all without any distinction of caste and creed. Buddha was very liberal in accepting the disciples into his religion, but the rules of morality imposed by him were very strict. Many of the "Bhikshus" failed to observe the strict principles and openly objected, for which they were driven out from the "Sangha." They formed secret conclaves and suggested relaxations even during the life time of Lord Buddha.<sup>1</sup> The first council of the "Sangha" was held at "Rajagriha" after three months of the "Mahaparinirvana" of Lord Buddha. "Mahakasyapa" presided over the same council and steps were taken to settle religious disputes among the "Bhikshus". In that council the "Suttas" and the "Vinaya Pitakas" were recited for the first time in which Upali and Ananda took important parts. The disputes arose among the "Bhikshus"



regarding doctrinal questions which could not be settled in that council for which the controversy increased. The next council was held at "Vaisali" after one hundred years, where some "Bhikshus" of progressive nature demanded for relaxation of strict rules. Their demand were not accepted in the council. Then the dissenters seceded and convened another "Mahasangha". Thus the Sangha was divided into two separate groups. The orthodoxies were styled as "Sthabtrabadin" or "Therabadin" and the progressive group as "Mahasanghika". Subsequently the "Stabirabadins" are named as "Hinayan" and "Mahasanghika" as "Mahayan". The main point of difference between the two groups was that the "Stabirabadins" or "Hinayanists" looked upon Buddha as essentially a man of an exalted nature subject to human limitations of life and death, while "Mahayanists" looked upon Buddha as a superhuman being. This controversy resulted in the growth of two separate schools within the



province of Buddhism itself. The “Mahayanists” worshipped “Boddhistavas” and read “Mahayana Sutras”, while “Hinayanists” adhered to strict observance of the rules and principles prescribed by Lord Buddha.

The Mahayanists are of the views that “Lord Buddha is all might” for which they were called “Vaipulyabadin”. During reign of “Kaniska” a number of Mahayani literature were composed in the first century A.D. The Mahayana doctrines achieved full fledged form during the period from 2nd Century to 5th Century A.D. Nagarjuna was a great philosopher and preacher of Mahayan, who was residing at “parimalagiri” of Odisha during 2nd Century. He was famous for his Sadhana and renowned as “Tantric Shiromani”. In his literature “Manjushree Mulakalpa” he remodelled “Mahayan Sutras” into Tantras. After him, Asanga, Vasubandhu, Dingnag, Sankasawami, Buddhaghosha and Dharmakirti have composed different literature of Mahayan sprang during 2nd century to 5th century A.D. They all belongs to Odisha, who composed all the literatures in Sanskrit instead of Palli. The imagination of “Boddhisattva” is the noble idea of Mahayan, the meaning of which is “Bouddhoya Sattwam aviprayosya it Boddhisattva” or man who desires to enrich the Boddhi.<sup>2</sup> The main principles of Mahayan are “Triakaya” i.e. “Dhamakaya”, “Nirmanakaya” and “Sambhoyakaya”, in which the super achievement of Boddhisattva has been described. The aim of the Mahayanists was to attain Buddhihood in and through different stages of Boddhisattva hood, which is a state of perfect knowledge about the void-nature of the self and nonself mixed up with an emotion of universal compassion for the redemption of all the suffering beings.<sup>3</sup> The Mahayan Buddhism introduced seven kinds of worships i.e. “Vandana”, “Puja”, “Papadeshana”, “Purnyanumodan”,

“Adhyekshana”, “Beddhichltaraptad” and “Parinamana” to enrich the Boddhi. Adoption of “Satparamita” or six qualities like “Dana”, “Sheela”, “Kshanti”, “Biryā”, “Dhyana” and “Prajna” are essential for “Sadhaka”. The “Sadhaka” worships “Prajnaparamita” as Goddess.

The Mahayanic way of worship became Tantric system. Tantric elements such as “Dharini”, “Mantra”, “Mudra”, “Jantra” and “Mandala” were adopted and rules with rituals are being strictly observed during Tantric worship. The Mantra element seems to have been introduced in Mahayan Buddhism first in the form of “Dharini”. The meaning of “Dharini” is that by which something is sustained or kept. According to faith of Tantric Buddhism “Dharini” is capable of keeping the religion. The philosopher Vasubandhu divided “Dharinis” into four categories such as “Dharma Dharini”, “Artha Dharini”, “Mantra Dharini” and “Kshanti Dharini”. He also advised Sadhakas to realize essence of Mantras through concentration. There are 8000 stanzas of Mantras in “Astasahasrika Prajna Paramita”, which is an important Tantric literature of Buddhism. This important literature has been reduced to few stanzas and known as “Prajna Paramita Hrudayasutra”, which was further reduced to make room for the “Prajnaparamita Dharini”. The next step in this chain led to the conception of a “bija” in one syllable “pram”, in response to which “Sunya” may transform itself into the form of the goddess by name “Prajna Paramita”, who is a veritable metamorphosis of the Prajnaparamita literature.<sup>4</sup> The “Dharinis” are said to be endowed with great powers. The mantras which are regarded as carrying great potency are composed of a string of syllables which bear no meaning etymologically. According to Vasuvandhu, the unmeaningness of Mantras is their real significance which is to be realised



through concentration only.<sup>5</sup> The Mantras are very powerful only when they are applied in a strict manner. At the time of recitation of the Mantras the mind should be kept away from all sorts of impure reflections and should be concentrated on the letters of the Mantras only.

In Tantric Buddhism “Mudra” is important. The Mudras are generally taken to be mystic signs made by the particular position of hands and fingers. In “Sadhanamala” different types of Mudra such as Padma, Vajra, Ghanta, Shankha, Khadgaetc have been described.<sup>6</sup> In Tantric literature Mudra expresses different meanings with the aim of obtaining final purification and final deliverance from the miseries of life.<sup>7</sup> “Advaya vajra samgraha” describes four types of Mudras which are related to four types of realisation of bliss. Mandala is also important as Mudra. Mandala means the religious diagrammatic symbol. The Mandala is the magic circle containing mystic figures and diagrams were introduced to offer worship. After introduction of “Dharini, “Mantra”, “Mudra”, “Mandala” and “Jantra” the path to enrich Buddhahood became easy, for which this Tantric system was accepted by different catagories of Sadhakas. In the early period of Mahayana “Manjushree Mulakalpa” was written by Tantra Shiromani Nagarjuna which is contemporary to “Prajna Paramita”, in which the method and rituals of Tantric worship, names of deities, Mudra or poses, Mandala or diagrams with all the processes have been described. Nagarjuna has also expressed his realisation in “Madhyamika Karika” for which he is called as the founder of “Sunyavada”. His disciple “Aryadeva” has written the findings of “Sunyavada” in “Chatusataka” and the same has been translated in Chinese language by Hiuen Tsang under the title “Satasastra Baipulya”. Nagarjuna and his followers by effort of their

Tantric realisation change the colour and tone of Mahayana to the extent of evolving a new “yana”, which is popularly known as “Mantrayana”. Accordingly “Mahayana” was devided into two school of thoughts i.e. “Paramitanaya” and “Mantranaya”. “Paramitanaya” is explained by the theories of “Sautrantrika” or “Yogachara” or “Madhyamika” and “Mantranaya” is explained by the theories of “Yogachara” and Madhyamika.<sup>8</sup> The “Mantranaya” is blended with the theories : of both “Sunyavada” and “Vijnanavada”. “Prajnaparamita Sutra” is the guide Literature of “Sunyavada” and “Lankavatara Sutra” is the ideal literature of “Vijnanavada”. These two noble literatures are treated as “Prasthandwaya” or two noble paths to enrich Buddhahood. On development of Tantrism Mahayana was transformed into “Mantayana”. This transformation is most important change of development in the history of Tantric Buddhism.

Tantric Buddhism grew within the province of Mahayan and new process of attaining Buddhahood within shortest time was discovered by Tantra Siddhas. The new process is called “Guhyasamaja Tantra” in which another element was introduced. The new element is “Sakti” or woman was considered a manifestation of divine energy. The “Guhyasamaj Tantra” was also introduced for the worship of five “Dhyani Buddhas” presiding over five “skandhas” or elements of which the universe is composed.<sup>9</sup> The theory of five “Dhyani Buddhas” is important and noble idea for quick attainment of Buddhahood. Besides this, some secret and immoral practices are found introduced in the “Guhyasamaja Tantra”. Scholars opined that this new system is the full-fledged development of Tantric Buddhism from which “Vajrayana”, “Sahajayana” and “Kalachakrayana” arose.<sup>10</sup> These three divisions are the result of different ritualistic traditions of “Guhyasamaja Tantra”. The propounders of



“Vajrayana”, “Sahajayana” and “Kalachakrayana” were Indrabhuti, Laxminkara and Pitopada respectively all of whom belonged to Udiyan or Odisha.<sup>11</sup>

“Vajrayana” is characterised as the “Path which leads to perfect enlightenment” in Sadhanamala, which may be termed as “anuttara Samyaka Sambodhi” in Sanskrit.<sup>12</sup> The word “Vajra” is used in a special sense to represent “Sunya”. The “Dharmakaya- Buddha of the Mahayanists seem to have been gradually replaced by “Vajrasattva or “Vajrakaya”. The “Vajrasattva” is generally taken as the Supreme Being in Tantric Buddhism, who is the Primal Enlightened one-the Adi-Buddha. This Adi-Buddha is in possession of five kinds of knowledge which are like five attributes of the lord. From these five attributes proceed five types of “Dhyana”(meditation) and from these five types of “Dhyana” there emanate five deities who are known as the five “Dhyani- Buddhas”. These five Dhyani-Buddhas are the five presiding deities over the five “Skandhas” or elements of which the universe is composed.<sup>13</sup> They are Rupa (form), Vedana (feeling), Samjna (perception), Samskara (impression) and Vijnana (consciousness) and these five Skandhas, according to the Guhyasamajatantra, are presided over by the Dhyanibuddha, viz-“Vairochana”, “Ratnasambhaba”, “Amitava”, “Amoghasiddhi” and “Akshobhya” respectively. The Dhyani Buddhas, like the Skandhas, are considered eternal and they manifest themselves without passing through the intermediate stage of Boddhisattva or in other words, without depending upon others for their origin.<sup>14</sup> Another striking feature of “Vajrayana” is the introduction of “Sakti” particularly for obtaining emancipation through “Yoga” and “Samadhi”. According to “Guhya Samajatantra” this has been introduced

for “Prajnabhisika” or the initiation of disciples with Prajna or Sakti. The five Dhyanibuddhas are of five different families (Kulas) with their saktis. “Vajradhatvisvari”, “Lochana, Mamaki”, “Pandara” and “Aryatara” are the families (Kulas) of Vairochana, Aksobhya, Ratnasambhaba, Amitava and Amoghasiddhi respectively, who are the real symbol of “Moha,” “duesa,” “Chintamani”. “Raga” and “Samaya”. The five Dhyanibuddhas of five different Kulas (families) with their Saktis (divine consorts), Skandhas (elements), Mudras (Postures), Vahanas (vehicles), Varnas (Colours) and with their Boddhisattvas, Pratyeka Buddhas, Bijamantras etc are regarded as the emancipation of the Vajrasattva, the Primal Enlightened one Adi-Buddha, who is not only of the nature of “Sunyata” but also of the non-dual state of “Sunyata” and “Karuna”. In “Vajrayana” everything is “Vajra” or perfect void. The God worshipped is vajra, his image is Vajra, the worshipper is Vajra, the materials of worship are Vajra, the Mantras uttered are Vajra, the process of worship is Vajra and everything connected with the worship is Vajra. The supreme goddess of this school of thought are Vajrasvari, Vajradhari and Vajra-Varahi.<sup>15</sup> Women adopted for the yogic practices were called “Vajra-kanyas”. Due to difference in rituals, worship and yogic practices, the Vajrayana divided into six categories i.e. Kriyatantrayana, Caryatantrayana, Yoatantrayana, Mahayogatantrayana, Anuttarayogatantrayana and Atiyogatantrayana. Vajrayan made remarkable contributions to Buddhism. There were eminent teachers in the Buddhist Vihars to impart teachings on the Tantras.<sup>16</sup>

Sahajayana is an important school of thought having a distinctive philosophy and process of Yoga. There were eighty four numbers of Sahajiya Sidhas, who have composed many literatures such as charya-songs and dohas. Sahaja stands for the ultimate innate nature, that



makes one realise this ultimate innate nature of the self as well as of the Dharma. The literal meaning of the word “Sahaja” is that which is inborn or which originates with the birth or origination of any entity (Sahajayate iti Sahaja). The word “Sahaja” literally means that which accompanies with birth and manifests itself as the primitive and natural propensities in man. The path that helps man to realise the truth through satisfying these inborn and fundamental propensities is, therefore, the most natural and easiest of all paths and hence, it is called the “Sahajapath” or “Sahajayana”.<sup>17</sup> “Sahaja” can neither be explained by anybody nor any speech can express it, it is only realised by the self through the merit of serving at the feet of Guru. Santipada, Sarahapada, Tadakapada, Kahnupada, Luipada and other Siddhas of Odisha have composed so many songs basing on the philosophy of Sahajayana, which are called “charyagiti”. The Sahajiya Siddhacharyas, are in view that all the ways of religious worship should be through human instincts, for the reason that religion is meant for man and not the other way round. Hence the supremacy of human form must be recognised and under no circumstances should the natural and spontaneous transformations of mental and physical passions or their sublimation be suppressed. The Sahaja way of devotion does not, however, mean unregulated sexual pleasure, but desires of the human beings to be allowed to fulfill, form a part of it. Necessity of a Guru or a spiritual guide is must for “Sahajasadhana” to realise the Supreme Reality.<sup>18</sup>

“Kalachakrayana” is a phase of “Vajrayana”. It is said that the extreme development of the Tantric phase was reached with the “Kalachakra”, which, although unworthy if being considered a philosophy must be referred to here as a doctrinal basis. It is merely a coarse

Tantric development of the “Adi-Buddha” theory combined with the puerile mysticisms of the “Mantrayana” and it attempts to explain creation and the secret powers of nature, by the union of the terrible “Kali”, not only with the Dhyani-Buddhas, but even with Adi-Buddha himself.<sup>19</sup> The word Kalachakra literally means the wheel of time. Scholars like H.P. Shastri explained that, Kalachakra is the wheel of destruction and Kalachakrayana means the vehicle for protection against the wheel of destruction.<sup>20</sup> This definition has also been explained in the Tantric text “Sri Kalachakra Tantra”, a manuscript preserved in the Cambridge University Library.<sup>21</sup> It is clear that, the study of Kalachakra does not prove the theory of demoniacal Buddhas. Kalachakra is a deity and an embodiment of “Sunnyata” and “Karuna” and is embraced by the goddess Prajna and represents the philosophical conception of Advaya or non-duality. He is regarded as the Adi-Buddha or the progenitor even of Buddhas, that is to say, the Dhyani-Buddhas. It is understood from the “Kalachakratra” that the Mandala (circle) of the deity is composed of all the planets and stars. The central deity “Kalachakra” is encircled by minor deities who represent time or time factor. Kalachakra means the absolutely unified principle of “Prajna” and “Upaya.”<sup>22</sup>

Odisha had a vital role in evolving Tantrayana. Tantrayana is a combination of Vajrayana, Sahajayana and Kalachakrayana and all these three branches of Tantrayana owes its origin to Odisha. Kamakhya, Srihata, Purnagiri and Uddiyana are four Tantric Pithas of which Uddiyana is the first and important Pitha. Most of the philosophers, scholars, Siddhacharyas and Sadhakas are found connected with Uddiyana. Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, Asanga, Vasubandhu, Dingnaga, Vasumitra, Triratnadas Sthiramati, Dhamapala, Chandragomini, Chandrakirti and



Dhamakirti all are connected to Odisha. Among eighty four Siddhacharyas Sarahapa, Nagarjuna (2nd), Savaripa, Luipa, Vajraghanta, Kambalapada, Padmavajra, Anangavajra, Indrabhuti, Padmasambhava, Laxminkara, Jalandharipada, Virupa, Kahnupa, Lilavajra, Darikapada, Pitopada, Bhusukupada, Kakkuripada and other prominent Siddhacharyas took birth in Odisha. Padmasambhava was regarded as Sakyamuni in 'Nepal and Tibet. Mantrayana, Vajrayana, Sahajayana, Kalachakrayana grew in Odisha. Buddhakapala Tantra, Yoginitantra, Hevajrat Tantra, Samputa tilaka Tantra, Krushnayamari Tantra, Vajramruta Tantra, and Mahamaya Tantra were introduced by the Siddhacharyas of Odisha, which needs a special discussion. There are so many Tantrapithas named Surabhagiri, Bhojakagiri, Puspagiri, Udayagiri, Lalitagiri, Ratnagiri, Vajragiri, Solamapur, Jayashram, Jagadala, Vanasuranasi, Kuruma etc. were situated in Odisha. Tantric Buddhism had a long career with all its manifestations in Odisha that provided suitable field for its evolution, and development as reveal from the records and monuments.

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## Critical Discussion on Tulasi Kshetra

Balaram Lenka

Kendrapara, popularly known as Tulasi Kshetra, occupies a prominent place in the religious map of Odisha for the magnificent temple of Baladevjew. Tulasi was the daughter of demon Kandara. As the demon became tyrannical and the people suffered a lot, God Balabhadra killed him. By the request of his daughter Tulasi, Balabhadra married her and the place became famous as 'Tulasi Kshetra' after Tulasi.<sup>1</sup>



Historians debate on Tulasi Kshetra. The name might have been derived from Tosali. N.K.Sahu states that Lokavighraha, a Vighraha king changed the name of 'Kalinga Rashtra' to 'Dakshina Toshali'.<sup>2</sup> He further states that around 600 A.D. northern Tosali extended from the river Kapisa to Mahanadi and Southern Tosali extended from river Mahanadi to Rishikulya. Both the Toshalis remained under Sambhuyasa and Lokavighraha, respectively.<sup>3</sup> However, around 602-03 A.D. Sambhuyasa

succeeded in unifying both the Tosalis. From this Tosali, it is suggested that the term Tulasi is derived.<sup>4</sup> Of course, the fact is not tenable.

Another reference to Tulasi Kshetra is found from Sarala Dasa's *Mahabharata*. He was a poet of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century and most probably

served in the army of Kapilendradeva. There after he became a saint and composed the *Mahabharata* in Odia language. He might have composed this epic amidst Tulasi-garden and named this place as 'Tulasadevapura' which later on

became famous as Tulasi Kshetra. It is worthwhile to quote a stanza from his *Mahabharata*.<sup>5</sup>

*Tulasadevapura je puni Bhrata khanda  
Jambu Rashtra Odra Rashtra Svarna Maratanda  
It means :*

"There are many places like Tulasidevapura, Bhrata Khanda, Jambu Rashtra, Odra Rastra and Golden Martanda".



The fact can be analysed with caution. It is learned that there were many Tulasi trees near the Baladevjew temple in the past. Even today a garden exists near the temple which contains Tulasi trees and it is famous as 'Tulasi Kanana' (Tulasi Garden). It is probable that amidst the Tulasi trees, he was writing his epic and must have given the name Tulasidevapura' from which 'Tulasi Kshetra' has been derived.

Bipra Madhuri, a poet of Sixteen Century Odisha also refers to Tulasi Kshetra. In his book, *Tulasikshetra Mahatmya*, he states<sup>6</sup>

*Kandara Atmaja Karane  
Kshetra Rachilu Prabhu tene  
E Brahmakshetra Pratisthita  
Tulsikshetra Name Kshyata*

*It means:*

"For the sake of the daughter of Kandara (demon), you created this land (*Brahmakshetra*) which became very famous as *Tulasikshetra*".

Here, a fact can be discerned that Sarala Dasa who was flourished earlier to this poet had mentioned Kendrapara as "Tulasadevapura". Poet Bipra Madhuri named this place as Tulasikshetra. A suggestion can be made here that in the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Century A.D., Balabhadra who was the State deity and had lost its importance, was again made popular around 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. Further, the name 'Bipra' prefixed to Madhuri suggests that the poet was a Brahmin. During 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> Century A.D., there was also a need for the Brahmins to revive Baladeva or Balabhadra Cult in Odisha due to obvious reasons.<sup>7</sup> Thus, Kendrapara became famous as Tulasi Kshetra from around 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.

Tulasi Kshetra and Kendrapara are interchangeable terms. Very often Tulasi Kshetra is described as Kendrapara. There are also various opinions regarding the derivation of the terms 'Kendrapara'. The episode of demon



Kandara has been cited. Some opine that the term 'Kendrapara' has been derived from the name of 'Kandarasura'.<sup>8</sup>

It is very interesting to note that the present place names centering to Kendrapara are known according to the names of the fallen body parts of the demon king.<sup>9</sup> Such as Asureswar is derived from the fallen cut head (*Asura Sira*) of the demon. Balagandi is derived from the fallen *gandi* (trunk) of the demon (i.e. Kandara Padi) Kamar-Khandi is derived from the fallen *Kamara* (waist). *Navi Khanda* or Lahakhanda is derived from his fallen *Navi* (Naval) of the demon. Angulai is derived from the fallen Anguli (finger) of the demon. Besides these places God Baladev founded some Siva temples (Asthasambhu) over the other fallen parts of the demon like Swapneswar Siva Temple at Kantia, Bileswar Siva Temple at Kajala, Amareswar temple at Gopa, Kapaleswar Temple at Garapur, Rameswar at Biraswati, Lankeswar temple at Gualsingh, Arteswar Temple at Jagannathpur (Nilakanthapur) and Garveswar Siva Temple where demon's body parts like feet, neck and waist (part) were fallen. The demon's body (*Gandi*) is buried at Balagandi which is proper Kendrapara.

Some research scholars have formed the opinion that Kandarasura who lived near Chandikhole was not a demon but an ardent Buddha arhat (follower of Buddhism) and a



tantric. He was a leader of a aboriginal race like Kondha (Kondharasura). According to his name the place name “Kandharapara” or ‘Kendraparah’ has been derived.<sup>10</sup> But other scholars think differently that the name, Kendrapara is derived from the word “Kendara” (one kind of musical instrument made of gourd) and ‘para’ means hamlet of a village. This instrument is played by some sects of people called Nath Jogi (Yogi), who earns his livelihood by playing ‘Kendara’ and by moving from door to door for alms.<sup>11</sup>

After the advent of the new Nathism, some sects of people adopted Nathism and called themselves Natha or Natha Yogi. It is worth mentioning here that one ancient stone image of Machhendranath, one of the chief preacher of Nath cult is worshipped at Rajnagar (Pattamundai). It is understood from an inscription on the body of this image that Nath Cult was prevalent in Kendrapara area during 9<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. The descendants of Nath family are now living in area surrounding Kendrapara at Ichhapur (Kendrapara) Choudakulat, Taradipal (Pattamundai), Chandiapalli (Aul), Nikirai, Kashati, Chandol, Rajnagar, Derabis etc and Kendrapara being its Kendra (Centre) the name derived Kendrapada or Kendrapara.<sup>12</sup>

Another thing to be noted that the word ‘Kendrapara’ is derived from the word ‘Kendra Palli’. In ancient times, it was a centre (*Kendra*) of business. People carried on their trade and commerce from this place to other places through the 3 important rivers of Odisha which flow on the soil of Kendrapara. They are the Mahanadi, the Brahmani and the Baitarani. There were some villages (Palli) on the banks of the rivers. The soil was rich and fertile. There was bumper production of fine rice, ghee, salt, fish, fine clothes etc. There is a river named Gobari near Kendrapara town which helped the people to carry on their business. There was another river named Madhusagar (dead)

near Kendrapara town which in ancient times helped a lot the people for business. Some remains of boats, ships, Buddhist statues have been discovered from that dead Madhusagar. It indicates that Kendrapara was a centre of business. Since it was the centre (*Kendra*) of business in the coastal area of Odisha, it was known as “Kendrapara”.

There is another river named Chitrotpala which flows through this district. It touches Jagatsinghpur district. It has been suggested that *Che-li-ta-lo* port was somewhere on the river bank of Chitrotpala in Jagatsinghpur district, adjacent to Kendrapara.

In this connection, Hiuen Tsang’s accounts can be analysed. He mentions that *Che-li-ta-lo* was a Port of Odra.<sup>13</sup> It was a great port of Buddhist importance. It was situated on the sea coast. From his account, it is known that Charitra was not only a prosperous port but also a centre of Buddhism and it contained four Buddhist *stupas*. It was a rendezvous for merchants who embarked on the sea and for others from distant places who travelled here and there. The Simhala (Sri Lanka) was about 20,000 li to the south of *Che-li-ta-lo*. Standing on the seashore of this city in a calm and tranquil night, one could see the brilliant light from the pearl of the *stupa* over Lord Buddha’s relic in Simhala.

Cunningham<sup>14</sup> identifies *Che-li-ta-lo* with Puri and most of the scholars accept this view. In recent years endeavours are being made to identify it with a place near Chandbali in Bhadrak district or Tirtol in Jagatsinghpur or with a village named Manikpatna on the bank of Chilka lake. However, to the present writer, *Che-li-ta-lo* might be a place near Diamond Triangle (Lalitgiri, Ratnagiri and Udayagiri) from Chandikhole in the present Jajpur district towards Paradip Port which was during the visit of Hiuen Tsang, a Buddhist Centre. Except this place, no place discussed earlier contains Buddhist remains.



The discussion on *Che-li-ta-lo* by Hiuen Tsang gives thought for analysis as Kendrapara. The place *Che-li-ta-lo* was a resting place of the merchants who traded in that area. If *Che-li-ta-lo* can be a port located near Chitrotpala of Jagatsinghpur district, it is definite that the merchants must be resting in a village (Para) which is nearer to that port. Since, Kendrapara is very nearer to Jagatsinghpur, the possibility of its location near *Che-li-ta-lo* cannot be ruled out. Since, it was a centre (*Kendra*) of business and the merchants remained in Village (Para), with tolerable degree of certainty, it can be stated that the name 'Kendrapara' has been derived from these two words – 'Kendra'/Centre of business and 'Para' (living place of Merchants).

Tulasi Kshetra looks like Tulasi leaf (holy basil). God Sri Baldev likes Tulasi (holy basil) very much. Tulasi can be used in two senses. One Tulasi is the wife of Balabhadra and another Tulasi is *holy basil*. The second statement is the most appropriate. Tulasi is used in every rite and ritual of God Sri Baladev. Without Tulasi Bhoga (offerings) cannot be named as *Mahaprasad*. The gods live near Tulasi tree and that place is the sacred. It is said:<sup>15</sup>

*Tulasyam Sakala Deva Vasanti Satatam Yata.  
Atastamarchayelokah Sarban Devan Samarchayan.*

*It means :*

"In Tulasi (holy basil) dwell all the Gods. So, for the worship of Gods, human being use those leaves."

Tulasi leaf has medicinal values. Man recovers from illness like cold, cough, asthma, indigestion etc. by taking Tulasi leaf as a medicine. It is an Ayurvedic medicine which heals many diseases.

It is very interesting to note that Kendrapara is termed as Tulasi Kshetra. The historical debates among the historians continues

regarding its name. However, one thing can be surely discerned that due to the august presence of God Baladev, this place has figured prominently in the religious history of Odisha.

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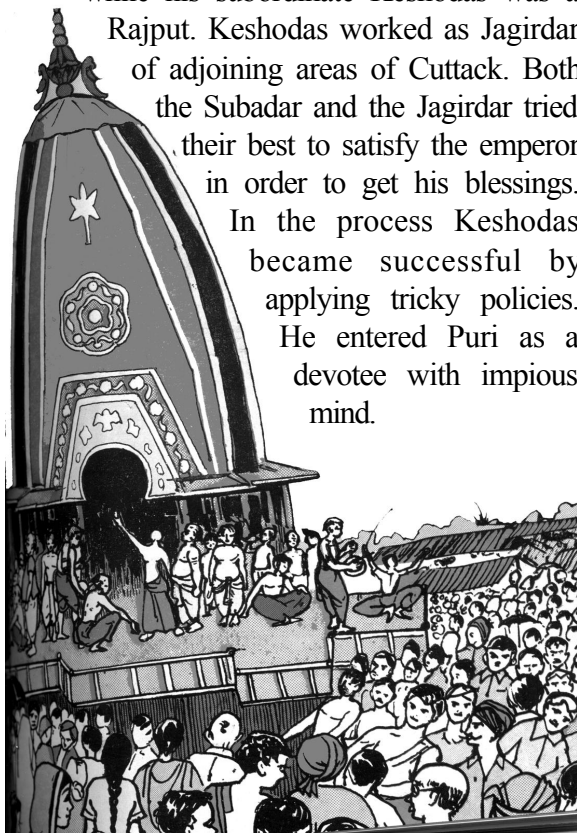
## Burning Cars

*Dr. Saroj Kumar Panda*

This event took place during Car festival at Puri in the year 1609 when Jahangir was the Mughal emperor. In fact Odisha being separated from Bengal became an independent Subah in 1607 A.D. Thereafter the Mughal Subadar appointed for Odisha stayed at

Cuttack. Hasim Khan was the first Subadar while his subordinate Keshodas was a Rajput. Keshodas worked as Jagirdar of adjoining areas of Cuttack. Both the Subadar and the Jagirdar tried their best to satisfy the emperor in order to get his blessings.

In the process Keshodas became successful by applying tricky policies. He entered Puri as a devotee with impious mind.



Before coming to Puri, Keshodas had sent a message for visit and *darshan* of Lord Jagannath. Rajputs are normally devoted to Jagannath. Therefore listening the news of arrival of Keshodas, the temple priests hoped for profit and well-being of the temple. The Jagirdar from the beginning exhibited his self applause by donating lavishly in Srimandir. But later he alongwith Rajput soldiers in disguise displayed their treachery by possessing Srimandir.

By that time the Trinity were in Gundicha Temple. Attention of all was focussed there. Keshodas alongwith his soldiers reached at Gundicha Temple and found a large crowd. The treasury house was closed. Finding no alternatives he plundered all the accessories (made in silver and gold) fitted with *Ratnasinghasana*. When the temple servitors opposed they had to meet with obscene oppression.

The news of sudden invasion and plunder of Srimandir reached Khurda. The then Bhoi ruler Purusottam Dev (son of Ramachandra Dev, the founder of Bhoi dynasty) advanced towards Puri alongwith ten thousand cavalry, three to four thousand infantry (Paikas) and many chariots. All gathered around Gundicha temple and blocked



its doors. Many of them dragged the Cars upto the boundary wall of the temple and ascended upon those. There was a fierce fighting between the Paikas and the Rajputs in which the latter were decisively defeated, many of them died. There was panic among the Rajputs. But all of a sudden Keshodas had resorted to an unique trick.

The Rajputs pulled the bamboos attached to thatched roof and partition inside temple compound. They also pulled the clothes and canopies from the premises and collected oil and ghee. They prepared torches and set fire on those. The Rajputs threw those burning bamboos from inside the Gundicha Temple premises towards the compound wall. The three cars were guarded by the Paika soldiers. The three chariots - Nandighosha, Taladhwaja and Darpadalana were set on fire as a result of the Rajput soldiers' notorious act. The chariots were burning while the Paikas in order to save their lives jumped from there. Many of the Paikas died during the encounter. It was an extreme example of cruelty by a Hindu against the Hindus. For this anti-Hindu move, Keshodas was designated as 'Keshodas Maru'.

It is known from both the *Madalapanji* and the account of Mirjanath that after burning of three chariots, the devotees took the trinity in *palanquin* and left at Srimandir. Due to in human act of Keshodas Maru, the preparation of *Srimahaprasad* at Srimandir was stopped for eight months. Instead of cooked food only dry foods were offered to the Lords during this period.

After invasion and plunder of Srimandira, Keshodas had developed intimacy with Jahangir for which he was promoted to the rank of Mansubadar with fifteen hundred soldiers under his command. This has been recorded in 'Tujuk-i-Jahangir'. In Indian history the Rajputs are glorified for their patriotism, idealism and sacrifice but in Odishan soil, Keshodas had portrayed his anti-Hindu and treacherous character.

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## A Legend of Proud Millionaire and Lord Jagannath

*Nirbachita Suar*

Lord Jagannath, identity of all Odia people and Odisha is known as a legendary God. The very genesis of this great deity is based on various legends. A lot of legends are found in different scriptures of Odia language. Again a lot of legends are yet to find their places in scriptures, but those are alive in the form of story telling from generation to generation. The present presentation of the legend is an example of transformation of a proud millionaire to a high degree of spiritual personality.

This was possible with sheer concentration in meditation, self confidence, and self reliance. As we know, our Almighty Lord Jagannath is Lord Vishnu and omnipresent God. He takes different tests of his devotees before attracting towards Himself. He wipes out all his negative qualities of his devotees i.e. ego, ignorance, proudness, etc. He is not present in the Divine Log (Daru), but He is a living entity for all.

He rules upon our every sense to intimate His presence. He is really human god for all of us. His presence is felt in our thoughts and in faith not in our wise arguments. So He is very delicate God, but is associated to close people, who like to Him.

In the past, the essential commodities were available in cheap rate. So that it was never possible to spend lakhs of rupees for a single Bhoga in the temple of Lord Jagannath.

Once a millionaire came to the holy city of Puri on pilgrimage. He had a desire to offer one lakh of rupees for a single “Bhoga” of Lord Jagannath. He expressed his wish before the servitudes and king also.

Observing his eagerness the temple servants (Pandas) sat together to discuss, but they could not find the way to spend such a huge amount of money for a single “Bhoga”, when the thing are available at so cheap rate. But the proud millionaire pilgrim spoke repeatedly the said thing that he would spend one lakh of rupees to feed the Lords a meal. If the Lords would not be able to consume, he might consider taking back the said amount.

This type of sarcastic statement by the proud millionaire challenged the prestige issue of the temple of Lord Jagannath. When the Ananda Bazar was considered as the greatest restaurant of the world, how it could not be possible to spend one lakh rupees for one Bhoga of Lord Jagannath. Lord of the Universe could not be able to consume mere one lakh rupees for his Bhoga, where a number of items are offered to the Lords every day.

The proud millionaire waited in puri to get positive reply from the king and the temple servitudes to serve the Lord. The temple servants (pandas) could not arrive in any conclusion. At last it was decided by them that the responsibility of the consumption of one lakh



rupees in Bhogas would be left to Lord Jagannath. Now Jagannath Himself would say what Bhoga could be offered to Him.

Lord Jagannath felt the helplessness condition of the king and the temple priests. The Lord at night said to his main servitude in a dream “well, the pilgrim is proud of his wealth, what can he offer me merely with one lakh of rupees. I want only a betel from him.

The betel should at least be a good one where the lime used should not be ordinary lime available in the market. It should be the lime prepared out of pearls produced from the head of the elephant (Gajamukta). After he offers Me the betel next I shall think regarding the Bhoga that should be appropriate for him.

In the next morning ,the millionaire asked his priest about what the temple authorities decided to accept his gift for one lakh rupees for a single Bhoga, to be offered to the Lords in his presence. The priest said last night the authorities discussed on this matter but they failed to arrive at any conclusion, so that the matter has been left to Lord Jagannath Himself. The millionaire said again the money should be spent for a single Bhoga in his presence. Otherwise, after his departure who knows whether the amount would really be spent for the purpose or not.

While they were talking like this, the Panda (main priest) of Lord Jagannath arrived there with the message of the Lord that the deity wanted to take only one betel now and after that, the items of the Bhoga would be intimated. The chief priest again said, lime of that betel would not be out of ordinary conch shell, but the elephant’s pearl should be used as lime. As it is generally known that to get Gajamukta from the head of the elephant was a very difficult task. Because, all the elephants could not hold Gajamukta in their heads. Only special category of elephant could possess this precious elements(Gajamukta)in its head. It was very

difficult to identify this special category elephant. To find out the lime of Gajamukta ,one has to kill lakhs of elephants, which was practically not possible and it was a challenging task for the millionaire to get the special lime from Gajamukta.

The proud millionaire now understood his limit and ran to Lord Jagannath with folded hands by saying,”Oh Lord ! I am a poor creature. What can I give you then? Even I am unable to give you a betel,” with this he surrendered to the Lords in the tearful eyes after realizing his mistakes. His proudness vanished, and felt, “really, Lord Jagannath is Creator, nourisher and destroyer of the entire universe. Man is a mere helpless creature. Without the order of the Lord of Universe, nothing can happen in this cosmos.

Since Lord Jaganath is the master of whole mankind let us surrender ourselves before Him and pray

*‘Bhuja tale mote rakha Mahabahu !  
Bahu tale mote rakha,  
Bipula bhuja bistaridele prabhu !  
Ki kari pariba dukha, Mahabahu !*

( Gajapati king Sri Bira Kishore Dev)

(Oh ! God having big hands !, Keep me under the shelter of Your hands. Please keep me under the shelter of Yours arms. Oh God ! If You enlarge your big arms, there would be no sorrow at all.

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## Dowagar Maharani and Jagannath Jenamani; The de facto and de jure Superintendent of Sri Mandir

*Dr. Janmejy Choudhury*

The paramountcy of the British crown over the Indian states began to be asserted with greater certainty after the revolt of 1857-58. The Company's policy of annexation was reversed, but the paramount power exercised its functions beyond the terms of the treaties in accordance with changing political, social, religious and economic conditions. In 1859 Raja Birakishore Deb, the superintendent of the Jagannath temple died issueless. It was reported that he had adopted as his heir a son of the Raja of Khimedy, a child of four years of age, only a few hours before his death. In his will, he had empowered his wife to adopt another son in the event of that boy's death. The will also declared his wife as the guardian and administration of all property real as well as personal, and empowered her to manage the affairs of the temple as usual. During the minority of the boy, the government did not think it proper to allow the court of wards to interfere in the matter. The superintendence of the temple was also left to the Rani Suryamani Patamahadei in accordance with the terms of the will.<sup>1</sup> Thus from 1860 the administration was headed by Rani, the widow Maharani of Raja Birakishore deb, though according to the traditional system, the minor boy was known as Raja Dibyasingh Deb and the 'anka ganana' began in his name. For about twelve years the temple administration was run



almost without any complaint. Raja Dibyasingh Deb took over the duty of the temple when he came of age.

Soon the attention of the government was drawn to some problem of the temple. In early 1875 four pieces of stone had fallen from inside the temple from a height of 40 feet above the floor level and there were several dangerous cracks on the walls. The assistant engineer, who inspected the damage done to the temple reported on 5 August 1875 as follows: "the temple as it now stands is in my opinion dangerous for pilgrims



and servitors who would constantly resort to the place when the Gods take their seats inside. As there is chance of more stone falling in I would therefore suggest that the temple should be left wholly unused, and the idols removed elsewhere, till the place is made perfectly safe and sound by executing the necessary repairs.” This view was also endorsed by the European executive engineer. It was, of course, not possible to close the temple entirely to the pilgrims. Raja made necessary alternative arrangements and placed the deities in front of the ‘Anasara Pidhi’ adjoining the main temple. The pilgrims, Raja reported, had no difficulty in visiting the temple for performance of ritual ceremonies and daily offerings. As regards the repair of the temple, a three fold scaffold was constructed consisting of large wooden timbers suitable to carry up and down the large stone required for the purpose. By March 1876 the repair works were over.<sup>2</sup>

In October 1875 the Raja drew the attention of the government to some problems of management of the temple. The income derived from the revenues of the mahals allotted for the purpose was quite insufficient to meet the expenses. The annual net deficit was of about 15,000 rupees and it was recovered from the personal income of the Raja. He suggested some measures to improve the financial condition of the temple<sup>3</sup> and probably enforced them to meet the expenses borne by him. A few days later some servitors of the Sri Jagannath temple submitted a petition to the commissioner in order to draw his attention to some instances of the mismanagement of the affairs of the temple by the Raja.<sup>4</sup> It was alleged that Raja was charging money from pilgrims for witnessing certain ceremonies of the temple. Generally the Sevakas of the temple discharged their duties on the hereditary basis, but it was alleged the Raja had appointed some persons from families not connected with those

works by taking bribes. Such appointments led to endless dimensions among the Sevakas and serious irregularities in the worship of the deities. The petitioners even, complained that the Raja had assaulted and beaten some former Sevakas.<sup>5</sup> He had also reduced the quantities of their Khei by half and naturally they performed their duties in the temple with much hardship. It was further alleged that money, valuable ornaments etc., offered to the deities by pilgrims were not duly recorded and were being misappropriated. The Sevakas also observed that the general conduct of the Raja had been in variance with the recorded rules and ancient usages and customs connected with the temple. The public looked upon the government as the ‘only saviours of the institution from ruin’.<sup>6</sup>

By 1876, however, the government had repealed section iv of act 10 of 1840 and had transferred full control of the temple affairs to the superintendent. Consequently, T.E. Ravenshaw pleaded his inability to interfere in the matter and the Raja was left to manage the temple as best as he could. But it was obvious that the young Raja had seriously antagonized a section of the priests and attendants of the temple. The situation, as it seemed, was heading towards a crisis.

Two ceremonies, Govinda Dwadasi and Dolajatra, which came in close proximity in early 1877, brought large number of pilgrims to the temple. The crowd was not properly controlled and in the rush which occurred at the Lion's gate at least eleven persons were crushed to death on two occasions. Such a lamentable loss of life aroused much criticism against the management of the temple and especially Raja Divyasingh Dev, the superintendent, was held responsible for the accident. His apathy, neglect and want of control over his subordinates, the Lieutenant-Governor believed, were the main causes of the disaster.



The displeasure of the government was shown in withholding temporarily the title of Maharaja which was to be conferred on him according to the notification issued in January 1877.<sup>7</sup> The local officers were also blamed for their lack of foresight and unpreparedness. They did not take proper notice of large crowd in Puri and also failed to take sufficient measures for controlling the internal arrangements of the temple which led to the loss of life. The Commissioner of Orissa was required to submit a scheme for regulating the large number of pilgrims to the temple.<sup>8</sup> But before any scheme for better management of the temple affairs could be fully implemented, Raja Divyasingh Dev was arrested on a criminal charge of murder.

Raja Divyasingh Dev was charged with the murder of Siva Das, an old ascetic in February 1878. Siva Das, the Mahanta of a Math at Damodarapur, 6 miles off from Puri had the reputation of a religious man with a number of disciples. He was asked to come to the Raja's palace in the night of 23 February for treatment of a sick person in the household. Accompanied by four of his disciples he reached the palace in the evening and was admitted alone to the house. His four disciples remained at the gate from 8 P.M until after midnight while an ascetic was being inhumanly tortured inside the palace. His body was thrown into the lane adjacent to the palace and he crawled to the main gate where his four disciples were waiting. They immediately, admitted him to the hospital where, after much suffering, he breathed his last on 10 March 1878. But before his death he had accused the Raja Divyasingh Dev and his servants for inflicting injuries sufficient to cause death.

On 11 March 1878, the Raja and his servants were committed to trial under section 302 of IPC.<sup>9</sup> The special trial was held at Cuttack by the session judge who sentenced the Raja and four of his servants to transportation for life. The

Calcutta High Court also confirmed the sentence of transportation on the Raja and two of his servants. Thus, Raja Dibyasingh Dev, the superintendent of the temple, became a convict and spent the rest of his life in Andaman. There was a sharp reaction among the god-fearing people of Orissa who regarded Raja of Puri as a part and parcel of the Jagannath cult. Some attempts were made and petitions were submitted to exonerate the Raja from the punishment. But it was of no avail. He was stealthily sent from Cuttack to Andaman. After a few years, he became mad finally breathed his last in that island.<sup>10</sup> Some says that Raja was escaped from Andaman and came to Kendrapara where he lived at Balababa Math in disguise. Before his death in 1904 he disclosed the fact that he was Raja Dibyasingh Dev of Puri. Thus, public addressed him as Rajababa. He constructed a subway from that Balababa Math to Gobari river. Raja constructed that subway for his protection if British force will come to arrest him again. Now his statue is there also.<sup>11</sup>

The exile of Dibyasingh Dev created immense difficulties for the government regarding the management of the temple. The government failed to find an easy solution and the problem dragged on till 1888 when a settlement was made of disputed claims. The government's intention was to bring about better management of the temple for convenience of large number of pilgrims who visited it throughout the year and especially in times of religious festivals. The process was initiated after the accident of 1877 and in the absence of Raja, the government hoped to mature its plan for better management of the temple. But the Dowagar Rani Suryamani Patamahadei, who had acted as the guardian of the minor Raja Dibyasingh Dev for about 15 years, did not like to hand over the management of the temple to any other authority. Fortunately, her case was



strengthened by the presence of Dibyasingh Dev's infant son who she placed, as the de jure superintendent and carried on the administration of the temple on his behalf.

In June 1878 Joseph Armstrong, the district magistrate of Puri, reported to the Commissioner that there were two courses open to the government for improving the management of the temple. The first course was to treat the infant son as the successor to his father, Dibyasingh Dev, and to recognize him as the future superintendent of the temple. Such a course was unanimously advocated by the Hindus. Armstrong observed that all Hindus wished to see the connection of the royal family maintained with the temple. In that case Armstrong suggested to bring the minor and his property under the court of wards and to appoint a manager to look into the temple affairs. A committee of the five Hindu gentlemen would look into accounts and such a plan, it was hoped, would gratify the Hindu community in general. At the same time Armstrong observed that at present the ceremonies of the temple were being managed by the Dowagar Rani Suryamani Patamahadei and her management was 'good and liberal'.<sup>12</sup> But being a female confined to her dwelling," the magistrate continued, "she could not well be allowed to manage the landed property."

After a long debate about the matter at different levels, the Government of India directed the Bengal authorities to submit a draft bill for a new legislation. It was desired that the legislation should be of 'a permanent nature'. But as regards the resumption of the temple lands were concerned, it was directed to abandon the proposals.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly in 1880 the Commissioner of Orissa prepared a draft bill for better management of the temple of Jagannath which was mainly designed to alter the provisions of the Act X of 1840. It provided: "The

superintendence of the temple and its interior economy, the conduct and management of its affairs and endowments and the control over its priests, officers and servant shall, subject to be other provisions of this Act, vest in a Committee of Management, where of the Raja of Pooree for the time being shall be the Hereditary President." The draft bill further provided that "the committee shall consists of not less than seven, and not more than ten members, exclusive of the Hereditary President, who must all of them be persons professing the Hindoo religion as practiced in the temple." A manager of the temple and its endowment was to be appointed soon after the passing of the Act, subject to the control and orders of the Committee. The manager "shall have the general charge and direction of the temple and all its establishment, and its endowments, receipts and disbursement."

Thus, the local authorities desired to bring temple administration under the supervision of a committee and a manager whereas the office of the hereditary president of the committee was to be left to the Raja of Puri. But the Government of India, in the meanwhile, changed its mind and no legislation was adopted to improve the management of the temple. Instead of making an act of permanent nature, the authorities decided to institute a suit under section 539 of the Code of Civil Procedure for reducing the power and status of the superintendent during the minority of the son of Dibyasingh Dev.<sup>14</sup> As soon as such a decision was taken, there was a storm of protest in Orissa. All section of the people desired that the Govt. should give up the idea of appointing a committee to take over the temple administration. Rani Suryamani, who was managing the temple affairs on behalf of the minor son of Dibyasingh Dev, petitioned the govt. against the proposed step. She said forcefully: "Although my son was unfortunately transported for life, he is living and



his son remains. On his being transported, it is no fault of his heir to be deprived of the ancestral property in as much as a son should not be punished for the offence committed by his father,” “You will be graciously pleased” she implored, “to retain the superintendentship of the holy temple in our family as was heretofore done.”<sup>15</sup>

Rani Suryamani Patamahadei now decided to call Jagannath Jenamani, the minor son of Dibyasingh Dev, as Raja Mukunda Dev, probably to strengthen the family claim to superintendentship of the temple administration. The district judge of Cuttack had issued a certificate to the Dowagar Rani to administer the estate of her grandson in August 1879. Subsequently in a note on 14 December 1882, the judge observed “The minor having been since named Rajah Mukunda Dev according to the custom of his family, his guardian Rani’s application for the substitution of the name of Rajah Mukunda Dev in lieu of Jagannath Jenamani is granted for the protection of the minor’s interests in the management of his estate and in the conduct of suits”. The assumption of the title of ‘Raja’ by the minor son of Dibyasingh was at once noticed by the authorities and its property was questioned. Rani defended her action by drawing the attention of the government to the family custom. “We have according to family custom,” She pleaded, “been compelled to put our grandson on the guddee as Mukunda Dev. If the government does not recognize our grandson, we will be put to shame and the Hindu religion will be undermined.” The government finally accepted her views and decided to recognize the title. It was observed that “the recognition of the title and appellation of Rajah Mukunda Dev assumed by the minor would be an act of grace which would not only be welcome to the family but be appreciated by the Hindoos generally.” The Lieutenant-Governor recommended that the name and title of Raja

Mukunda Dev be conferred as a personal distinction on the minor Raja.<sup>16</sup> Lord Ripon issued the Sanad from Simla on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1884 and conferred the title of ‘Raja’ on Jagannath Jenamani as a personal distinction.<sup>17</sup>

In spite of the title being vested on the minor Raja, the government was aware that he would not come of age for long 14 years. The Dowagar Rani, it was believed, was incapable of personally superintending the management of the temple and its endowments and hence there was a necessity for appointment of additional trustees. In January 1885, the government of Bengal submitted a scheme to the Governor-General in Council which contemplated to vest the superintendence of the temple in a committee of respectable Hindu gentlemen to be appointed by the civil court, with the Raja of Puri as president. The actual management was to be conducted by a paid manager, who would act under the immediate control and supervision of the committee.<sup>18</sup> The proposals were approved and sanctioned by the Governor-General in Council in February 1885.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the way was paved for legal action on the matter and a suit was instituted in the court of the district judge of Cuttack.

But before the final disposal of the case, the government applied for an interim order for the appointment of a receiver, an assistant receiver and a tahasildar to take charge of the temple properties. In early 1887 Raghunandan Ramanuj Das, the Mahant of Emar Math, was appointed honorary receiver by the court. One assistant receiver and a tahasildar were also appointed at the same time to look after the temple properties. Such a measure led to hue and cry in different quarters of Orissa. Protest meetings were organized at different places and people decried the interference of the government in their famous and most sacred religious institution like the



Jagannath temple. Rani filed a writ petition in the Calcutta High court on the legal advice of Madhusudan Das and fortunately the court decreed the appeal against the government order towards the end of March 1887. The decision was widely welcomed by the people in Orissa.<sup>20</sup> After the court decree in favor of Rani, the government desired to make a compromise in the original suit for appointment of a committee to manage the temple affairs. After prolonged negotiation, the parties agreed to move a compromise petition in the court of judge of Cuttack on 3<sup>d</sup> October 1888. The most important provisions of the compromise petition were as follows-

“That the right of superintendence over the Jagannath temple at Puri which formerly vested under Regulation IX of 1809 and Act X of 1840 in the Rajah of Khurda for the time being, continues in Rajah Mukunda Dev but during the minority of the Rajah his grandmother and guardian Rani shall exercise on behalf of the minor the right of superintendence over the temple till minor comes of age.

“That during such minority i.e., the period during which the Rani acts as the de facto superintendent of the temple, she shall appoint a competent manager to manage the affairs of the temple. That she shall delegate to such Manager all the powers which she exercises over the Sevaks of the temple, provided that the manager shall not be competent to dismiss any Sevak from his office without the sanction of the Rani.

“That in case the Rani dismisses the Manager, she should appoint another within a reasonable time failing which the Civil Court shall appoint a competent person to the vacant office.

“The duties of such manager shall be :

(i) To see the due performance of their respective duties by the Sevaks of the temple.

(ii) To make proper arrangements for the ingress and egress of the pilgrims at all times and for the comfort and safety of life and property of the pilgrims and particularly on the occasion of the great festivals when there is a large concourse of people and for this end to regulate the closing and opening of the temple gates.

(iii) “To see that the offerings made to the idols, and offered for sale within the Temple precincts are wholesome food, and to prosecute or otherwise punish such persons who offer for sale any unwholesome food within the precincts of the Temple.

(iv) “To carry out all lawful and proper orders issued by the Magistrate of Pooree for the preservation of public health, safety of the public and for the conservancy of the interior and exterior of the temple.

“That all the decree which the petitioners ask the court to pass shall cease to have force on the minor Rajah coming of age.”

After the compromise petition was moved, the court passed the decree on 15 December 1888.<sup>21</sup> Thus, Rani continued to administer the affairs of the temple with the help of a competent manager. The compromise was a victory for her claim to retain the effective control of the temple administration in the family of the Raja. Such an arrangement continued till 1897 when Raja Mukunda Dev attained his majority and took over the management of the temple.

In 1889 the Collector had reported about the young Raja as follows: “..... all attempts to improve the young Raja’s condition are frustrated by the action of the menials surrounding him, who, while addressing him as God incarnate, do their best to reduce his intelligence to that of the wooden image which adorns the temple of Jagannath.”<sup>22</sup> He could read



a little from a very easy Oriya primer at the age of thirteen. Naturally Mukunda Dev failed to become a competent administrator. Complaints of negligence continued and the problems became acute with the opening of the railways by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It resulted in a constant flow of pilgrims to Puri at all seasons instead of some great festivals as before. The Raja did not strengthen the temple staff to meet the new influx of pilgrims and consequently an accident occurred in the temple on 20 October 1901 during Durga Puja days. Two persons died on the spot and five others were severely injured in the rush of the crowd inside the innermost sanctuary of the temple.<sup>23</sup> Eventually, Raja Mukunda Dev was persuaded to improve the management and with his consent a senior deputy magistrate was appointed in 1902 to conduct the administration properly. Thus, by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, once again the government was bound to interfere in the temple administration by appointing a competent officer, though the hereditary royal control remained stable.

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## The Gopinath Temple of Remuna

Devidutta Das

Nestling on the eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal lies the small, quiet town of Balasore. Balasore boasts of a unique combination of tradition and modernity, science and religion. This place encapsulates not only, an expansive defence range for the experimentation and test of the Indian military artillery but also is a religious landmark for the Hindus of the country. Its increasing inclination towards a cosmopolitan ambience has not at all robbed its people of the religious bent of mind. The fact that thousands of visitors throng the various temples of Balasore validates the above statement.



Ten kilometres away from the town of Balasore lies the sleepy semi-town of Remuna. This place shelters five places of consecration, viz, Shri Khirochora Gopinath Mandir, Shri Ramchandi Mandir, Shri Madhabendra Puri Matha, Saptasara river, Gadagadeswara Mahadeva Mandir. Out of these five emblems of religious fervour, Shri Gopinath

Mandir is the one which has gained global popularity because of the story that underlines its existence in the tiny town of Remuna. The legend behind the origin of Lord Gopinath lays down that, in the *Tretaya Yug*, Shri Ramachandra had been in exile along with his wife Sita and brother Lakshman. When, Shri Rama was in *Dandakaranya*, one day on watching a cowman tending to his cows, he smiled a bit. Sita, on seeing her husband smile, inquisitively asked the reason behind that smile. Rama predicted that in the *Dwapar Yug*, he will take birth as Lord Krishna and would in the same way tend to the cows at the banks of river Yamuna. On listening to

this prediction, Sita insisted Rama to show her an image of Lord Krishna. Lord Rama on the request of goddess Sita engraved an image of Shri Krishna on a black granite stone lying over there. As soon as goddess Sita laid her hands on the image, it came into life. With the passage of time, this engraved stone was found by King Langula



Narasimha Deva and installed it in Remuna. From that day onwards that image was worshipped as Lord Gopinath. Another legend lays down the story that Remuna got its name from the fact that it was *Ramanya* or a very beautiful landscape. It was such a beautiful place that, Lord Gopinath instructed the King Langula Narasimha Deva in a dream that he wanted to get worshipped in that place. The King obeyed the instructions and constructed a temple on the very place and named it Shri Gopinath Mandir. In the course of time, Shri Chaitanya's guru Ishwarpuri and Ishwarpuri's guru Shri Madhavendrapuri came to Remuna and ultimately the image that was established in the temple was christened Sri Gopinath. Thus this place gained immense popularity in the whole of India.

The full name of Gopinath Mandir is Khirachora Gopinath temple. Khirachora means one who stole the milk bhog (ambrosia). Every aspect of the temple has a story attached to it. In the same manner this name also has an interesting story behind the christening of the temple. It is believed that Shri Madhavendrapuri, one of the devout devotees of Lord Gopinath had once visited this temple. After completing his prayer, he wanted to have the Khira bhog (the milk ambrosia) but as was his want, he never begged for food. With a heavy heart, he went to the nearby Ramachandi temple and started singing hymns in praise of Lord Gopinath. It is a daily ritual in the temple that every day twelve pots of Khira bhog are offered to the God. On that very day when those twelve pots of offerings were offered to the Lord, the priests found it to their utter surprise that one pot of the milk bhog was missing. The priests desperately searched for the missing pot, as it was regarded a bad omen if God's offerings are stolen. To their disappointment, they found nothing. That very



night, the Lord appeared in a dream of the chief priest of the temple and laid bare the whole secret behind the mystery of the stolen milk pot. He said that it was none other than he who had stolen the milk pot and hidden it inside the cloth that his idol is wearing. He further instructed the priest to immediately go and offer the pot of bhog to his favourite devotee, Shri Madhavendrapuri. The priest at once woke up and went to the main chamber where the idols were there and to his surprise found a pot of bhog. He took it and immediately offered it to Shri Madhavendrapuri, who was quietly sleeping under a tree in front of the Ramachandi temple. This incident rapidly spread far and wide, thus bringing huge number of devotees to the place and worldwide popularity to the place. It is a crime to steal, but the God himself committed this crime for the love of his disciple. It is a rare instance of God serving his devotee. This temple exemplifies God's unflinching and true love for his ardent believer.

A visit to this holy place is, thus, a must for every believer of Shri Gopinath.

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## Jagannath in the Name of Prashannadev at Basudevvpur

*Dr. Pratap Kumar Nayak*

If we open the annals of the Odishan history or the history of Utkal from time immemorial we will be sure that it is full of mystery. Many emperors and Zamindars have risen and fallen into dust. It was a suitable place for intellectual, religious and spiritual attainments. The religious set up is yet to be known to the historians and scholars. Whatever progress has been made by Science, Information Technology and literature in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century the veil of darkness surrounds the culture of Jagannath. What is true to the faithful is not true to the historians. It cannot be denied that Jagannath had a tribal origin. The cult of Jagannath is a liberalized and globalized concept.

Utkal is taken into mean a glorious country. John Beam calls this country as the land of bird killers or the outlying territory (Ut-Kala=Kalit=Cut off). H.K. Mahatab treats Utkal to be a Sanskrit term derived from "Okkat", a Canarise word, meaning cultivator of soil. Odisha is very well known as land of temples and specially for Jagannath who is regarded as the Lord of the Universe. Jagannath culture became popular under the fostering leadership of Gangas and Suryavamsi Gajapatis in every nook and corner of Odisha. For popularizing the culture of Jagannath the Gajapatis extended their royal support. Consequently a good number of Jagannath temples were erected in various parts of Odisha.



### **Lord Prashanna Dev**

Odisha is full of archaeological treasures ranging from the prehistoric times to the end of the Muslim race. Basudevvpur, the remote village of the past, very nearer to the blue water of the Bay of Bengal, the area of nationalists in the pre-independence era, in the north of Odisha has a unique destination of being a rich store house of antiquities. The concept of a deity for a state and a region is an inherent concept which historians and scholars have marked for the age old civilization of Egypt. Gods and deities were accepted with absolute tolerance. Gods and the forces of the nature have been personified from the time immemorial. The geographical location of Basudevvpur is that it is 14 kms away from the National Highway-05 but presently NH-16 to the west, 7kms away from the Bay of Bengal in the



east. It was full of jungles and trees in the remote past. Transportation was not there. Barter system was prevailing in the area where one deity Jagannath in the name Prashanna Dev was worshipped alone. This temple is just 2kms away from Basudevpur.

The date proposed for the construction of present “Prashanna Dev Temple” at Basudevpur is surrounded with mystery and doubt. No treatment has been given by the Archaeological Department or the Govt. of Odisha to know the history of the temple. Nor even any excavations have been made to ascertain the construction and time of the building of the temple. The dates may be within 1500 to 1700 A.D. as stated by some of the senior citizens of Basudevpur.

There are several tales about the temple of “Prashanna Dev”. Long time back at the time of rule of the king of Pataspur, Suryanarayan (nearer to Srijanga of Balasore) his daughter Mallika fell in love with Kumar Achyuta (the son of his Commander) and got married. The king did not approve it so they escaped for life. But they lost their life by the order of the king leaving two sons at the Sri Mandir Math under the Mataji Baidehi who had direct contact with the Jagannath temple of Puri. These two sons were named as Chaku and Maku Bhoi who were brought up under the guidance of the Gajapati King as Rout. At the time of Afghan invasion one Afghan Commander who is popularly known as Kalapahad invaded Gajapati King and dethroned the Hindu deity the Jagannath. But unfortunately these two brothers were driven away from the royal harem and deported. Finally Chaku and Maku came to the path of Maa Ankudeswari “one Goddess of Binayakpur of Basudevpur Block (Taluk)”. At night Maa appeared before them and told this was the time to save the king of Palia and the God Biranchi Narayan who was in danger from the Muslim attack. From Palia they marched towards Tihidi to Basudevpur. Chaku started his

reign. At last Chaku gained Ankuda and Maku regained Pataspur by the grace of Maa Ankudeswari.

It is said that the legal heir of Chaku Bhoi is Basudev Sudhala Dev Harichandan Bhuian. It is assumed that after his name “this area is named as Basudevpur”. To some others, in the name of God Prashanna Dev the area is named as Basudevpur. Another legend is there, one Basudev Ray of Khurda royal family who had been to this area and under his leadership he merged Veda, Ankuda and ruled. For which it is named Basudevpur. Fact or a fiction Basudev Harichandan defeated 14 (Fourteen) Mahalas (Subas) and became the unchallenged leader of Veda and Ankuda. As because he was the leader of superb quality he opened Mallaha Sahi, Akhada Badi where Bir Hanuman was worshipped. Exact date can't be traced because of non-availability of records. So it may be pointed out that in between 1500-1600 A.D a new rule started in this Zamindari. His immediate successor was Choudhury Kunjaban Rai Chandan.

### **Legend**

There are several folk lores and stories regarding the deity Prashanna Dev. The first one is that, there was a Kusuma Pokhari in the village of Artung 7 to 8km away from Basudevpur towards north and it was very nearer to the Bay of Bengal. During the reign of Choudhury Bidhu Bhusan some cow watchers saw a stone in the Pokhari. They used to play with that stone. But the Zamindar (Ruler) of Kaida (Mangaraj) dreamt about that stone who was no other than “God Baladev”. Next day he visited that Pokhari and realized his dream. But he couldn't bring that stone because that was under the Ankuda Zamindari (rule). News reached at Basudevpur and the ruler (Zamindar) with his followers approached the Pokhari and saw the truth. After a thorough discussion one amicable settlement was made. Basudevpur Zamindar allowed the stone to the



Mangaraj with some rewards and it was worshipped as God Baladev at Gud.

Others say the Zamindar of Basudevpur left with much grief and sorrow to his palace. But in the night God Jagannath appeared before him



*(Lord Prashanna Dev Temple)*

and directed to go and dry the pond. Miraculously there were two stones laying in the mud buried of that pond. Before the sunrise he again marched with pomp and pleasure and found two stones. One is called Jagannath and another is called Subhadra who is being worshipped now at Padhuan as “Kanak Durga”. The Zamindar was highly delighted by the grace of the God for which he named it as “Prashanna Dev”.

### **Temple Structure**

Built on a high plinth the temple of Prashanna Dev conforms to the feature of old architecture comprising the Ratna Bedi, Jagamohan, Natamandira and Snana Mandap. The temple represents the Rekha type of temple. The height of the main temple is 40 feet 6 inches, length 18’6" and breadth 17’4". Left to the Singhdwara there is a Snana Mandap which is 13’3" length and 10’2" breadth and the height of it is 3’7". The very striking thing is that the Ratna Mandap is 6/5 feet in length and breadth and height 3 feet. Another temple called Mukhasala was there but presently it is ruined. To the left of

the temple SriRam and right of the temple Srikrishna are worshipped as side Gods. A striking monument with marked elegance in front of the Singhdwara is the Garuda Stamba and Aruna Pillar which was added to the temple latter on.

### **Rituals & Festivals**

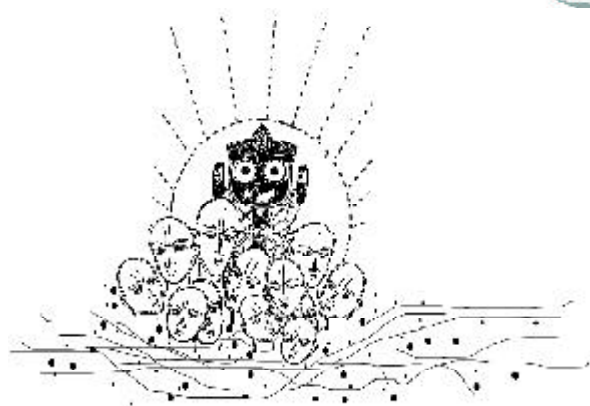
The rituals in the temple take place thrice a day. Puja starts at 6AM with cheese as bhoga, in the noon Avada and in the night Balya Bhoga (Khair and Ukhuda). Whatever festivals we observe in the Srikshetra here we see that except “Chandan Yatra”. Ratha Yatra is observed with much pomp and pleasure under the religious patronage of Choudhury family. Mausai Maa Mandir is there towards the east of the temple adjacent to A.B. College, Basudevpur called Balinagar. The Yatra inspires vim and vitality among the inhabitants of Basudevpur. The Rath of Prashanna Dev initially was of 16 wheels but now it is reduced to 4 wheels only. The representative of Prashanna Dev is called “Dola Gobinda”. Bigrah Prashanna Dev is purely made of stone not of wood. Had it been made of wood there would have been “Navakalebara”. So it indicates it is made of granite. Since 1700 A.D Jagannath is worshipped here as Prashanna Dev.

### **Garuda Stamba**

During the British period 4 year settlement was made at Basudevpur in the year 1899 and taxes were collected as Taiji, Mahal and Janaral and the area was reconstituted. In 1909-10 another settlement was made by the Biharies which is called 15 years settlement. For the first time Kabala was prepared and Patta system introduced in this locality. But neither the Britishers nor the Biharies have interfered in the Zamindari of the Choudhury. In 21<sup>st</sup> century excavations have revealed many undiscovered truths.

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## Paramesti Darzi and Sri Jagannath

*Dinabandhu Pradhan*

Bhakta and Bhagawan are always one. The two are inseparable. A Bhakta lives his life with intense love and devotion to his Lord. His God is the end-all and be-all of his life. He has one goal in life. It is to merge in the endless divinity. A devotee is thus a divine seeker for his eternal union with his God. His heart is ever vibrant with heavenly love. No time or place is necessary to have "Sadhana" in Bhakti. Bhakti can be developed at any place and at any point of time. God is not simply in existence in a temple or at any holy place. He is present everywhere in the universe. He is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. A Bhakta never considers himself away from his God even if he is miles away from his main divine platform. God is satisfied with anything that a Bhakta offers Him in oblation. God acknowledges his Bhakta's offer with utmost satisfaction. This is the divine relationship between a devotee and his God. Paramesti Darzi endowed with divine virtues was one such ideal devotee to his God, Lord Jagannath.

Paramesti Darzi belonged to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. He was a resident of Delhi. The term 'Darzi' means a tailor. Paramesti's father was a tailor of the then Badsaha of Delhi. He was a wizard in his profession. His son Paramesti Darzi inherited all the qualities of his father. Like his father, he was also a great devotee of Lord

Jagannath. Like a basil plant wafting out its fragrance from two leaves, Paramesti from his very childhood had displayed his talent in the profession of his father. He was a wizard in embroidery work. His 'Ista' was Lord Jagannath. He had learnt a lot about Jagannath philosophy from his father.

As Paramesti grew in age, he was married to a beautiful maiden named Bimala Devi. Soon Paramesti became a father of some children. He supported the livelihood of the family with what he earned from his profession.

Paramesti was well known as a devotee of Lord Jagannath. In his profession he was a very trustworthy person. His customers had great faith in him for his impeccable character. To look at him from outside, Paramesti was a worldly person. But in his heart of hearts, he was a "Gyana Sanyasi" by nature. In his everyday life, he read scriptures including the Geeta. His wife too was a devotee of Lord Jagannath. When, on any occasion, Paramesti heard about Lord Jagannath, he left his normal job and listened to His great glory with rapt attention.

One day, the Badsaha of Delhi called Paramesti to his palace hearing his name in embroidery work. The Badsaha sent information to Darzi that he was interested to see some of his outstanding performances. Any other person in



his place would have been very happy and thrilled to receive the invitation from the Badsaha. But Paramesti did not view the invitation of the Badsaha in that way. He took the invitation as a normal message. He simply informed the messenger that he would appear before the Badsaha on the appointed day.

Paramesti went to Badsaha's court on the appointed day with the best of the articles of his workmanship. The Badsaha scanned the articles. He was immensely pleased after seeing his achievements. He thanked Paramesti for his outstanding workmanship. While commending Paramesti for his excellent talent, the Badsaha said, "You are really unparalleled in embroidery work. I need to have a few of the items of your work in the court room. Please do for me two pillows studded with jewels. They should be beautiful and worth-seeing in my court.

Paramesti said, 'Jahanpana', I shall feel obliged to honour your order. But for that, there should be no time-limit. This is my earnest request to you. This does not mean that I shall take months to complete your work. I hope, Jahanpana will have no objection to my humble submission".

The Badsaha said, "Darzi, why do you lay this condition? Please tell me its implication".

Paramesti most humbly submitted, "Jahanpana, perfection is a super-human quality it is borne out of God's grace. Unless God wills, there can be no perfection in any work. Divine blessings are not mechanical. They trickle down from heaven. The Lord has to be kind enough for that. I shall seek God's blessings while doing your work. This is the only reason."

The Badsaha could not make out of any meaning from Paramesti's statement. At last he yielded to his request and okayed his submission.

Displaying his workmanship in the best possible way, he completed the two pillows as per the indent of the Badsaha. He had done the pillows with such expertise that anybody who saw his work was immensely pleased. Steeped in profound divine ecstasy, he thought to himself, "How could my work be so beautiful this time? This must have been the grace of my great Lord. The pillows look like heavenly art crafts meant for only divine indulgence. I see in them a sort of graceful elegance. Lord willing, He alone should have the two pillows for His 'Ratna Sinhasan'. I would have got my price, had the pillows been divinely accepted by my Lord. So thinking, Paramesti was lost in a state of transcendental reverie. His self was shrouded in the divine glory of his Lord.

In fact, that day was the day of Ratha Yatra at Puri. Paramesti lost control over his mind remembering the Car Festival of Sri Jagannath. The scene of the chariots being pulled by the devotees danced before his mind's eyes. Paramesti had visited Puri once in his life. He had seen the Car Festival. The roar of 'Haribol' of the devotees reverberated in his ears. Tears of devotion rolled down from the corners of his eyes. He felt as if he was present at Puri on that day. In the flow of his transcendental reverie it appeared to him that the covers of the pillows placed in the chariot of the Lord had been torn to pieces due to rough handling of the servitors in the jerking of the moving chariot. Shocked, he raised his two hands and muttered, "Prabhu, what do I see in your chariot? The covers of your pillows have been mutilated. Are you to go in this manner to Gundicha temple? At present, I have two beautiful pillows. Of course, they are meant for the Badsaha of Delhi. I can offer one pillow to you."

Thinking so, he raised his two hands holding one pillow and offered the same to the



Lord. Paramesti was then in a state of highest emotion. Soon he lost his conscientiousness and fell unconscious. Everything about the happening was the cosmic game of the Lord. The large-eyed Lord received the pillow from Paramesti by extending His gigantic hands.

After sometime, Paramesti came back to his senses. He was in a highly ecstatic mood. He looked at the place where he had kept the pillows. Lo and behold! One pillow was found missing. He was confirmed then that Jagannath Mahaprabhu had received the pillow from his hands. His joy knew no bounds at the divine happening. Emotionally, he danced in his room shouting 'Haribol, Haribol' at the pitch of his voice.

Two days after, the Badsaha sent for Paramesti Darzi with instructions to deliver the indented pillows at his court. In compliance, Paramesti appeared before the Badsaha on the appointed day. He appeared there with one pillow instead of two. When Paramesti showed the pillow, the Badsaha was immensely pleased. Others present in the court were also wonderstruck seeing the magnificence of his handicraft. The Badsaha next enquired about the other pillow. Paramesti did not hesitate to inform him that he had offered the other pillow to Jagannath Mahaprabhu. He also narrated the details of the miracle. Paramesti statement baffled the Badsaha and also all the courtiers. The Badsaha could not believe his ears hearing from Paramesti that Sri Jagannath at Puri had received the pillow from the latter's hands from Delhi. How could He extend his hands up to Delhi? Is it ever possible? This is simply unbelievable from the viewpoint of a common man's perception.

Parodying his emotional outburst, he commented, "what the hell are you blabbering before me, Paramesti? How dare you talk like a

madcap in the open court? Can anyone believe that your Jagannath at Puri could receive from your hands a pillow from Delhi? The Badsaha quivered in anger objecting to the versions of Paramesti. He questioned him again and again as to where he had kept the other pillow.

But Paramesti had only one answer to all his questions, "The Lord had received the pillow and the Badsaha could ascertain the truth of the matter from Puri." At last, the Badsaha suspected that Paramesti must have sold the pillow to some moneyed person and grabbed the sale proceeds for his personal benefit and he was lying to him in the name of the Lord Jagannath. The Badsaha lost his temper and ordered, "Arrest the man and throw him into the prison. He deserves severe punishment."

The orders of the Badsaha were immediately carried out. The hands and legs of Paramesti were tied with ropes. Soon he was dumped into a dark prison. But Paramesti was in no way affected by the punishment of the Badsaha. He knew well that he had not committed any crime. He had offered the pillow to Sri Jagannath Mahaprabhu and the Lord had received the pillow from him by extending His gigantic hands. He sang Bhajans and spent his time in the prison.

One day, there was a miraculous happening in the prison. It rained cats and dogs outside followed by a cyclonic storm and incessant lightnings. The vicious surrounding created elements of fear in the minds of the people. Paramesti had no reaction at the start of the occurrence. But in the passage of time, tears came to his eyes. It appeared to him that very soon some devastation was going to take place in the stately-home of the Badsaha. He sang Bhajans in the prison-cell at the pitch of his voice.



Soon he swooned and collapsed on the floor of the prison cell.

When he came to his senses, he found before him his Lord blessing him by raising His right palm. Paramesti saw that he had no ropes on his hands and legs. He was entirely a free man. The padlocks on the prison door were also open. There was heavenly effulgence all around. Paramesti could not believe his eyes. He was lost in a state of divine happiness enjoying the ambrosia of his Lord's benediction. After some time, the Lord disappeared in a gradual sinking order.

In the same night, the Badsaha had a peculiar dream. He saw a black man near his bed. He was with a big stick in this hand. In quick succession, he was assaulting him saying, "Wicked Badsaha, listen. You have imprisoned my devotee, Paramesti Darzi. You have a misconception that he had misappropriated your pillow. It is not so. The pillow is with me on my Ratnasinhasan. His only fault is that he offered it to me in devotion".

Seeing the dream, the Badsaha suddenly woke up. He saw all around but did not find anybody nearby. He was now confirmed that Lord Jagannath had appeared before him in dream. He quivered in fear. Somehow, he passed the rest of the night with great difficulty. In the

morning, he hurried to the prison with his minister. Lo! The prison doors were open. Paramesti was sitting alone in the prison cell. He had no ropes on his hands and legs. A halo of divine effulgence was emitting out from his face. In unusual ecstasy, he was singing Bhajans.

After a look at Paramesti, the Badsaha was lost in a state of divine exuberance. With folded hands, he apologized to Paramesti and set him free. He released Paramesti from the prison to the accompaniment of music with Harikirtan.

After release, Paramesti returned home. He was no longer in his worldly self. He was already one with his Lord in body, mind and spirit. In fact, that was his great goal in life.

Hey, Jagannath, there is no shore to the ocean of your divine bliss. It has no end. It is vast and boundless. You are the anchor of everybody's worldly life. Help us with your benediction so that we can cross the ocean of life and attain the ultimate goal of God realization.

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## Oh My God

*Sidhanta Samantaray*



“Shantakaram Bhujoga Sayanam Padmanavam Suresham  
Biswadharam Gagan Sadrusam Megha Varnam Subhangam  
Laxmikantam Kamalanayanam Yogirvidhyan gamyam  
Bande Vishnu Bhababhaya Haram Sarba Lokaika Natham.”

GOD is one and inseparable. He exists everywhere, omni present and all powerful. He pervades the entire Universe which is created by Him. The man is the greatest creation among the entire evolution. Oh my God, it implies as we must reach at his feet very nearer to dearer. Like our parents very nearer to dearer, this also implies how far devotion towards God, there are certain examples in Puranas, the devotee Sudama was great devotee of Lord Krishna, for which the devotee Sudama had to face great sufferings, the devotees Dhruba and Prahallad were heartily diverted and dedicated to God, and for that they had to struggle and strongly conscious towards God and at last Bhagaban Vishnu Himself appears before the devotees for Darshan and accordingly the two devotees were very nearer to dearer and the relationship between Bhakta and Bhagaban became closer. The same is the relation between our parents. Oh My God means how far we are nearer to dearer to God. So for that we can find several example in the sphere of spiritual consciousness in the heart of the people. In the field of Jagannath Culture, we establish ourselves as blood relation to each other. Before God there is no fellow-feelings.

So, the universality of Jagannath Culture is most prominently noticed in the acceptance of Mahaprasad by members of all castes and creeds together. A devotee after taking Mahaprasad touches his head, with that hand as he considers, Mahaprasad to be most sacred. We are always conscious in our mind, if something wrong committed by us, suddenly we say “Oh My God”, that means only God will make clear for removal our any mistake. Lord Jagannath is the Supreme Authority of the world. The supreme spirit has two states of form, the (1) the nature of the world (Prakriti) and other: its frames formation as appearance (Vikriti). Prakriti is invisible form. Vikriti is the aspect (Akara) in which He pervades the universe. Worship and meditation can be performed in relation to His Akara aspect only.

Taking Mahaprasad together, provides a greater satisfaction and feelings about the consciousness of God. Take example of Bhakta Prahallad and his father Hiranyakashyap, as being aggrieved Hiranyakashyap asked to his son Prahallad “where is your God (Hari)” and who is your nearer and dearer God and suddenly Prahallad told his father “Oh My God” - Sri Hari. Hari exists everywhere in the heart of cleaned devotees. Then Hiranyakashyap saw God in the form of Narasingha Rupa (Vishnu). A devotee is always dedicated before God. He exists as the



symbol of blessings, without His blessings there is no existence of human life. So, He is the Guru, mother, father, friend and brother and He is everything. In this world whatever we find, all are the creation of God. Simply description of God in this form of the three deities as such: Sri Jagannath, Balabhadra and Maa Subhadra is the symbolic characteristics, such as : Satva, Raja, Tama respectively in connection of Purusottam. Lord Jagannath or Darubrahma which leads to brotherhood, heavenly bliss and spiritual unitary system and final salvation, as a result of which the entire human race will succeed in each and every sphere of life.

Oh my God, we love God, He loves us. Here love means our devotion is deposited before Him. So, We all are guided by Him. We perform our duties as per his instructions. God means only

the unseen power who is doing everything for the entire world. We have no knowledge about the existence of power. In our heart only we must have faith or love towards God otherwise we can not feel the consciousness of God. We love our parent likewise we love God, we must attain the favour of God and His feelings in our heart.

All are equal in the eyes of God by whom we all are stuck to each other in brotherly tie and ultimately the entire world will be free from-violence. Viwed from all points Lord Jagannath would appear to be the Supreme Authority in all matters, as social, religious, cultural.

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## Bhakti

*Rajkishore Das*

Bhakti .....  
the essence of God realisation  
lies beyond  
knowledge and reasoning  
is not mere outward show  
or ostentation  
but springs  
in one's inner consciousness  
It does not demand  
scholarship, learning or knowledge  
and capable of leading  
to God realisation  
with all certainty.  
In its pure State  
the experince of oneness  
with God

is achieved  
and a sincere seeker of truth  
can be successful  
in the company of those  
to a certain extend  
who have realised God.  
The purpose of life is  
to realise God  
and to develop  
awareness in God  
in one's individual interest.

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Rajkishore Das, At-Brundabanpur, P.O. Parjang,  
Dhenkanal-759120.



## Flashback !

*Akshaya Kumar Mohanty*

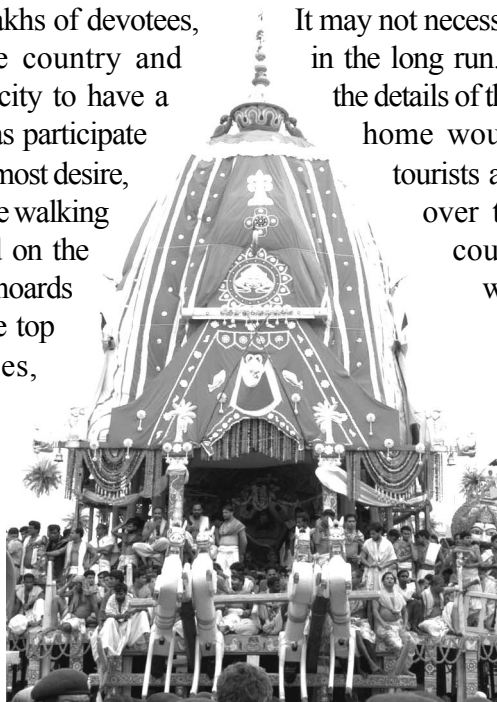
Ratha Jatra : A couple of days are left for this year's celestial festival of Lord Jagannath on earth. The grand edifice is smiling towards the crowd around- of course a welcome smile. A festival of this State that is Car festival of Lord Jagannath in Puri is known world over. Lakhs of devotees, tourists from whole of the country and overseas throng this temple city to have a glimpse of the Lord as well as participate in the colorful festival, with utmost desire, devotion and dedication. While walking amidst the maddening crowd on the grand road and looking at the hoards of camera arrangement at the top of the buildings both sides, glimpses down the memory lane become vivid.

During Doordarshan's SITE Experiment i.e, in the year 1975-76, when this author along with the camera unit reached Puri to officially cover the festival for

Telecast, he had to face a stiff opposition. The servitors, Daitas, Pandas and all those related to temple and above all, the common public raised their voices against this coverage in the pre-festival discussion. There was a lot of hue and cry. The

then social leaders and front runners of such grand event started resisting this decision tooth & nail. A subdued grumbling prevailed all over. Their view was, if such an event would be telecast, then the festival in Puri in reality would lose its importance.

It may not necessitate people to join the festival in the long run. Once the provision to watch the details of the festival through TV sitting at home would be made available, then tourists and devotees would not come over to Puri from far off places/ countries. Hence apprehension was strong. The famous temple, housing the deity of Lord Jagannath, Puri –the land of the Lord and over all the state of Odisha the land of culture, might lose tourists, visitors above all revenue and importance, once they extend the opportunity to view and enjoy it through TV from their own places.



Such an apprehension was of course genuine and logical at that point of time. If we analyze the different factors of growth of this land we shall find that the financial, social, economical factors of Odisha and of Puri in particular rest on Lord Jagannath and the cult,



His temple and temple rituals, the crafts and handicrafts, the scriptures and literatures. Thus, this opposition was more of sentiment. But with much effort they could be pacified. The hurdle could be removed. Because of Government intervention the disgruntled opponents reluctantly were compelled to yield.

At that time the coverages used to be in 16 mm camera film format with Reversal Raw stock. These sort of coverage were immediately processed in Doordarshan's exclusive film processing plant (at that time in the studio premises in Tulsipur, Cuttack) and instantly edited to the requirement and edited/ or unedited air freighted to Delhi for Telecast at the earliest. The journey of TV coverage for this mega event between 1975-76 through 1991-92 was historic and challenging for popularising this event. After the SITE experiment when this TV station and x'mission was converted to a regular transmitting centre for Odisha, the gadgets and resources were improved and upgraded. For the first few years considering the importance, popularity of the event and demand of the viewers, a condensed version of the happenings of the festival used to be produced at our Kendra and telecast in the National Network of Doordarshan (the only channel existing then). When this documentary used to feature in the Network after the festival every year, then emerged a huge demand from all corners to have this festival live in the National Network of Doordarshan.

And it happened. The year 1992 to '94 were eventful because Doordarshan, besides this whole country, could take the festival in TV to other countries through DD International channel. Ah, Live Telecast, it is a massive arrangement. The threefold Live telecast of car festival in National Network of Doordarshan is an all time record in mass media history. The whole of this

country and overseas watched this mega event with running commentary in English & Hindi and whole of Odisha got the benefit of seeing it in Odia, all originating from the source i.e. Puri. The National commentators of Hindi & English came to Puri & gave commentary from location, which is the practice till now. Such was the impact and publicity that tourists from abroad tied up their travel plan with this event.

A point to note, in the beginning years following telecast of a short report, the number of visitors were added. But after the live telecast of this event got started, it became a huge crowd pulling event of the country thus the number of visitors got multiplied year to year. This is contrary to all apprehension that TV might lessen the number of visitors where as it showed an uncontrollable growth over the years. In course of time this festival has been adorned by thousands of scholars, researchers, performers, litterateurs who got engaged onto this cult, volumes of literatures are produced. Endless seminars, meetings, deliberation are still going on.

In the year 2002 more private channels like ETV came forward for telecasting this event-live. And slowly it got added with other channels. At present, around 7 to 8 channels are on the show. But why then visitors are still increasing? What is the role of this visual medium? Attraction towards this visual feast or distraction?

In between these years many things have happened. Our Daitas and other servitors have become more media savvy. By now they know about the Tally lights of the cameras. Accordingly they cover or expose the deities as per their will during Pahandi or Suna besha. The commentators/Comperes have become conversant, hence need no briefing and queuing for a break for commercials. Television in Odisha



has already seen two Nava Kalebaras. The deities have accordingly been reborn. The next Navakalebara is hardly two years from now. The entire Govt. machinery is gearing up since a couple of years to meet the event. Crores of Rupees in each front are budgeted to meet the festival need, be it Road, Rail, Residence, Hotel, Hospital everything.

Yes, at every front there is a preparation. Ahead is the challenge. At this point of time the issue that comes to my mind is media, more particularly Television. The channels, their huge gadgets, hundreds of cameras, vans, satellite disc antennae, above all the manpower involvement. It is expected to form a parallel crowd. Even now this visual media is performing in a chaos. Through passage of time they have increased and also with a promise that they will swell up in years next to come. Nobody has presumably given a thought to coordinate this aspect. Of course; this

chaos can be regulated if a thoughtful effort is made.

Today while walking on the Grand road pre-festival all these are coming to mind in flash back. How come the visitors are not getting minimized in spite of so many Live Telecast ? Who could be the motivator ? To me the answer comes – Television, the visual medium. It is TV and its Telecast which has persuaded, motivated to have a glimpse of the festival in person.

The mass media as a whole is preparing for the Great Grand event. My prayer to Lord Jagannath is that let there not be more cacophony than symphony in the name of TV coverage.

Akshaya Kumar Mohanty, S-1/133, HIG Niladri Vihar, Chandrasekharpur, Bhubaneswar-21.



## The Omnipresent

*Shyam Prakash Senapati*  
*Trans. : Dr. Bhagaban Jayasingh*

O Lord !  
You manifest  
in the lilting tunes of  
flutes playing out  
to the rhythm of waves  
dancing against the beach.

You manifest  
among the virtues and sins,  
in the lush-green meadows,  
or in the boundless intensity  
of the deep forests,  
or in the sonorous music  
of the morning sea.

You manifest in  
hate and envy  
joy or bliss  
in the inconsolable cry  
of a hapless child,  
or in the glittering warmth  
of a mother's lap.



Dr. Bhagaban Jayasingh, 'Senapati Bhawan', Grand Road, Puri-1.



## The Monasteries of Puri — An Integral Part of Srimandir

*Braja Paikaray*

Lord Jagannath is the presiding deity of Odisha and Srikshetra is the nerve centre of various religious sects and philosophical doctrines. The religious teachers and scholars of different sects have founded a number of monasteries or Mathas to perform various religious duties. The monasteries of Puri are intimately associated with the temple of Lord Jagannath and use to observe different rituals traditionally. For example “Jagannath Ballav Matha” provides flowers for the decoration of the deities and “Uttar Parswa Matha” supplies special offerings of food to the temple of Lord Jagannath. Likewise the “Jhanja Pita Matha” wake up the deities in the morning by playing on different musical instruments and the “Jhadu Matha” has taken care of sweeping and cleaning the temple precincts.

The heads of the Mathas are called Mahantas. On special occasions the Mahantas are being consulted by the temple authorities and as per their advice solve many ritual problems. The Mahantas are considered as the spiritual guides of the general public and scriptural advisors to the Gajapati kings of Odisha. The Mathas own and possess vast landed properties being donated by the followers of different religious sects as well as religious minded persons for offering “Bhog” to Lord Jagannath in one hand and to facilitate the distributing of “Mahaprasad” to the pilgrims beggars and ascetics on the other hand.



The Monasteries represent various religion sects of Hindu religious namely Vaishnavism i.e. Sri Sampraday, Ramanandi, Kabir Panthi, Vallabhachari, Madhabachari, Goudiya Radhavallabi, etc. Saivism i.e. Dandi, Dasnami, Avadhuta, Naga etc. and Sakta cult along with miscellaneous sects of Nanak, Satnami and Sunyabadi etc.

Although the Emar Matha is wealthy and most influential among all the monasteries of Puri, the general public regard all the Mathas as equal in the ritual sphere. However the Mathas of Puri act as the connecting bond between the general public and the temple of Lord Jagannath for spreading the sacred tradition of the Lord.

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Braja Paikaray, Advocate & Notary Public, Sangrami Indumati Bhavan, Plot No. K.4 L.I.G.-609, Kalinga Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751019.



## Lord Jagannath

*Gourav*

On my maiden visit to Puri along my grandfather,  
 I quizzed, who the black faced figure is?  
 Who is decorated throughout in precious jewels?  
 Who dwells in that magnificent temple?  
 And worshipped by everyone?

My grandpa smiled and said, "He is Jagannath, the Lord of the Universe."  
 I enquired, if He is a god, why is He black,  
 And not handsome like Gods we see elsewhere?

Why does not He change his appearance to an attractive one?  
 My grandpa explained "Black signifies total purity and transparency like sky at night,  
 Like the fathomless Ocean, calm and quite"

My inquisition rose "Why then the eyes are so round and big?"  
 He keeps a vigil over entire universe through his big round eyes,  
 Over every deed and misdeed of His creation day and night.  
 To reward virtue and punish vice.

Then why does not He possess limbs?  
 Reply came "Calmly He watches with keen observation"  
 Permitting the offender from revision and restoration.

I interrupted "If He is the Lord, why does not He do anything?"  
 Grandpa continued "People would be getting their dues  
 After the same is evaluated;  
 And on the basis of the summation of their sins and virtues,  
 Their destiny would be set."

Again I asked "Why is He offered such a variety and huge quantity of food everyday?"  
 While He lacks a proper mouth?

And which otherwise would have fed numerous poor?"  
 Grandpa said "All food offered to Him are considered sacred,  
 And helping the poor and downtrodden satisfy their hunger"

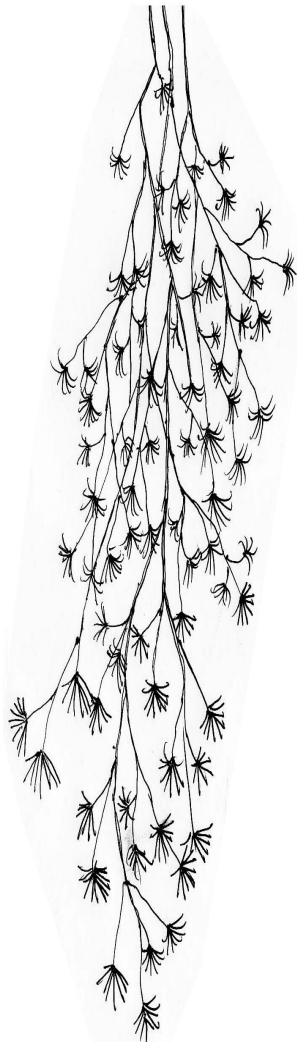
Then followed a natural question to my mind;  
 "If He watches everything,  
 If He reigns the universe,  
 If He takes care of everybody,  
 Why does not He come to our vision???"

Gourav, Std-VIII, DPS Kalinga, Cuttack



## The Celestial Preacher of Excellence

*Er. Raghunath Patra*



Descended swinging from seven steps  
slowly pace with flower –crown  
adorned with Tulsi, Jasmine, Lotus  
came to courtyard down.

Encircled by kith and kin  
moved looking left and right  
with searching eyes unwinking  
Looking heavenly bright.

Cowboys in guise of Daitas  
Have rushed forth to sanctum  
Vaishnavas in guise of Gopis  
at Lion's Gate, they swarm.

Gongs and tabor sound aloft  
“Jay Jagannath” cheer all  
In mammoth gathering He steps on  
with decent glance, no par.

Fragrance of sandal enchants all  
He stares right and left  
Searching for his dear and near  
to share feelings heartfelt.

A mate of mine asked me then  
who is this “Black One” tell  
where He goes, What for He  
Seems to be own, speak well.

With a tender smile, I replied him  
He is Jagannath, the Supreme Lord  
proceeds to Brindavan, Gundicha Mandir  
To redress sorrows of beloved.





The pastimes of love haunted Him  
leaving all majesty and splendor  
proceeds to Brindavan to redress pangs  
the long separation pains more.

In Tretaya embraced Sugriba and Hanuman  
in Dwapara embraced Gopi Gopal  
Now in Kali, His shoulders stretched  
to embrace devotees all.

From Dasia took coconut, mango  
From Manik curd with glee  
From Karma Bai Khechedi, took  
For Balaram, Salbeg car not flee.

Beyond all prejudice is He  
Beyond religions caste and creed  
Universal love surmounts all  
How meagre we are indeed!

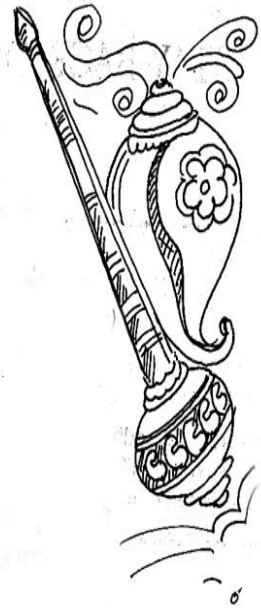
With smiling face, equal vision  
sitting in temple or car  
He intends to embrace saying all  
"You are mine, never despair."

Our mundane desires frustrate ever  
to mingle with Supreme Lord  
Like Gopis if we give up desires  
We can get almighty God.

"To love all" is the noble path  
to inherit sublime bliss  
In Car festival He sermons all  
"love ye all and relish."

With smiling face and rotund eyes  
shoulders stretched afront  
He teaches all to embrace all  
With celestial love and enchant.

Oh ! The celestial Preacher of excellence  
"To love all, you preach  
The poet loves you as his son  
boost him up to divine reach.

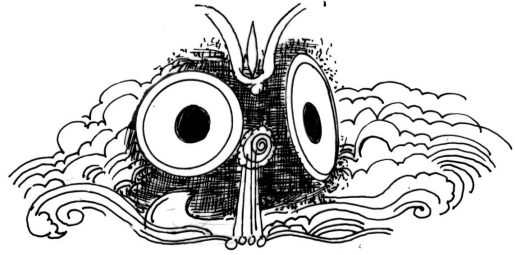




## Lord of the Universe

*Mohan Patnaik*

Hailed all over as the Lord of the Universe  
 Why then You shut your Lion's Gate to us  
 Are you a temporal God on earth taken hostage ?  
 Or really the God of Gods, of Mighty Sea, air and sky  
 That move at Your will  
 Why is Your Ratna Sinhasan the sanctum sanctorum ?  
 Where You are daily worshipped prohibits our entry ?  
 Are we Your untouchables or the sinned lot  
 Who You deny to feast on your Mahaprasad.



Do You know whose name in mind ?  
 We go to sleep ? Do you know with what joy ?  
 We pull Your chariot to crush our sin  
 The whole earth is Your temple is your temple  
 The sky above is Your Neelachakra  
 And the twinkling stars are Your thousand names.  
 Why then you decided to move back to Neelachal  
 When your Nine Days' Stay seem to us a nine days wonder.

Stay, stay with us on the chariot dear  
 And make us behold Your grace ever in wonder.  
 We shall get for You the purest water  
 Down the stream of Nirmal Jhar  
 We shall serve You our Sour rice and Pickle  
 As food for your three time hunger.  
 We can stand all around to protect from rain  
 And cover you with our meshed blanket  
 To hold You from winter pain.



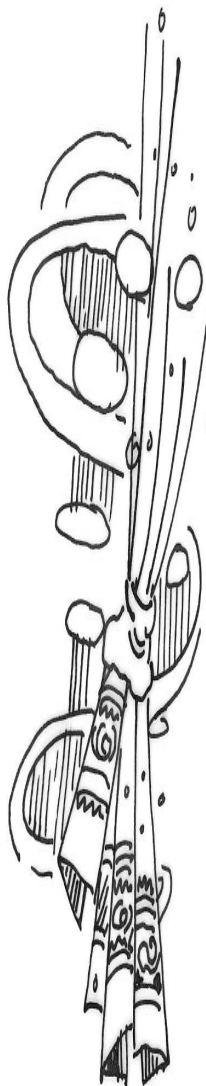
Kalia, Arre Kalia move not your chariot back  
 But stay, stay here over the wide green  
 And shine and shine here and  
 You shine the world over and help us wash  
 Our sins at Your Lotus Feet ever and ever.

Mohan Patnaik, Berhampur

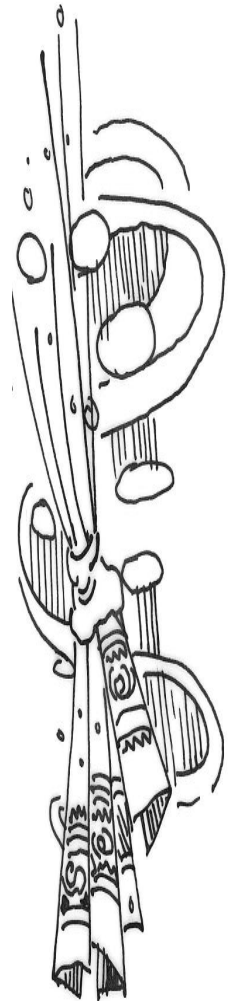


## The Deity You are, the Most Juggernaut

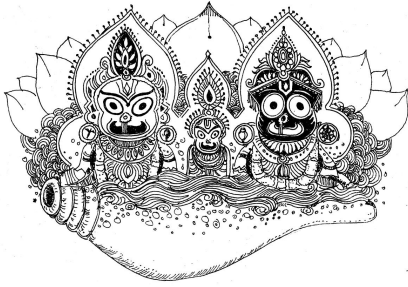
*Dr. Purna Chandra Ojha*



Omniscient, Omnipotent, *Hic et ubique* You are  
**O'** my laudable Lord Jagannatha !  
 De facto, unique is Your creation and unique  
**Deity** you are, the most Juggernaut.  
 I implore you gazing at Your colours ever sacred  
 Intense - blue that makes us very pure.  
 Shining as the moon, though black Your face  
 Seemly in Your sinciput the diamond very rare.  
 Homage to You oft and oft O' my Lord  
**Hare**-brained not You are I know verily,  
 As a wise arbiter, You can exonerate  
 Any wrong or sin committed by us freely.  
 River or sea can't move sun or moon  
 Rightly the whole world even can't stir,  
 Even a leaf can't flap by a hurricane  
 Easily or painfully if You not desire.  
 Virtue or vice, I do not know good or bad  
 Vivify my life my Lord not being illiberal,  
 In the domain of Your what the Universe knows  
 Ill-fated myself also, nothing is impossible.  
 Engage me in Your service that the seers  
 Earnestly seek by practising austre penance  
 Worship You, pray You, I, O' deity of wonder !  
 Wipe out the affliction of all, casting Your glance.



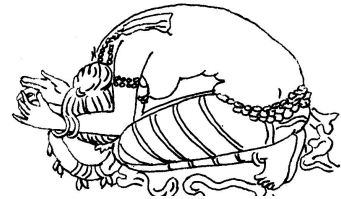
Dr. Purna Chandra Ojha, Singhamapur, Bahugram, Cuttack - 754200.



## Surrender

*Lokanath Suar*

..... Away from my death,  
But, nearer to every breath of my life,  
When, I close my eyes,  
Make myself egoless creature  
Sitting in loneliness,  
With devotional posture as saint,  
Surrendering everything of mine near your lotus feet, I Search !



..... Your divine presence is felt to me,  
Mingling with You ....  
Silently I ask ... Who am I ? What is my relationship with you ?  
Then, You silently appear .  
Opening Your two big shining eyes  
Having, incomplete and mysterious body .....  
With little smiling face,  
You silently talk to the devotees .....  
Through Your beautiful divine lover's look .....  
And, You whisper .... That I am present in your every senses ... feel it.  
Oh ! Lord, I see Million ... Million year's mystery  
Within Your two round shaped big eyes  
You know ! Yourself that how many  
Planets, stars are present within You.  
You see everything, but behave not knowing anything ...  
Oh ! Aye sages say ....  
You are omnipotent, supreme soul, creator of universe  
You are beyond nihilism ...  
From zenith to nadir ... from this part of the earth to ether  
Silently, nonstop you drive our life Nandighosh of all.. ... as charioteer  
..... Proclaiming the liberation from cycle of life . ...  
At the end,  
we all can pray ..... to save ourselves in one voice ...  
... ..... Jay Jagannath; Jay Jagannath ...

*Lokanath Suar, Lecturer in Law, G. M. Law College, Near Shree Vihar, Puri-752003.*



## The Path of Journey

*Rakshak Nayak*

*Trans. Laxmikanta Tripathy*

The beginning of all beginnings  
And the end of all endings  
Thou art the creator of time,  
The composer of void  
And the architect of fullness.

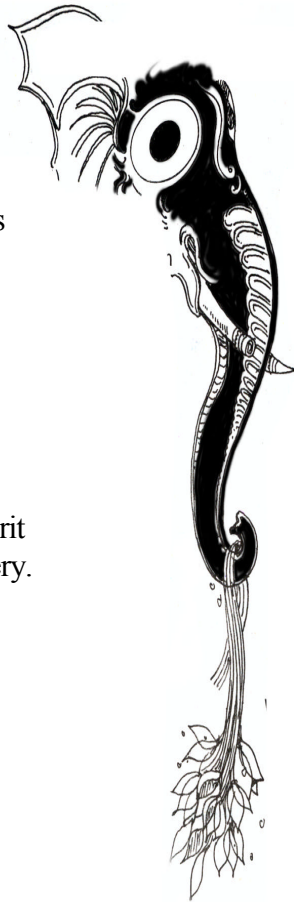
How to sketch thee?  
The perennial fount of all feelings  
And all impassiveness  
Thou art the supreme thirst  
Behind all human quest.

This life itself is a pursuit  
An unending question.

From earth upto the realm of spirit  
Stretches the vast sheet of mystery.

And in the dim light of space  
In the border line between  
The heaven and the earth  
It is difficult to see our faces.

In the welkin of our eyes  
Has been levitated the fright  
Resulting ultimately  
In our shelter under the canopy of a tree.



And the tree under which  
We have availed asylum  
Is the route cause behind ?  
All our activities.

I shall have to forget all those things  
And shall have to send them  
To a state of oblivion.

I shall have to wipe out  
All the floating clouds from the sky  
And I shall have to extinguish  
All my past and future.

The syllables written on the slate  
Shall also have to be erased  
And I shall have to be reduced to void.

From there I shall have to  
Start my journey afresh  
And the sole Master of that path  
Is Sri Jagannath  
The Supreme Deity  
And the Supreme Lord of the Universe.

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Laxmikanta Tripathy, Upara Malisahi, Puri.